**METRO/A15**

**QC cops kill 3 suspected car thieves in alleged shootout**

**WORLD/A8**

**Doctors declare Israeli PM Sharon out of danger**

**NEWS/A2**

**Opposition gears for new impeachment war**

**BUSINESS/B1**

**Foreign investments rise 64%, benefit manufacturing, real estate**

## Cheap noodles, rice useless as hungry have no money

MAHIRAP LUMABAN PAG GUTOM

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

SUBSIDIZED NOODLES AND rice are not enough to solve the growing hunger rate in the country if poor Filipinos have no money to buy food,

CHEAP/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

## Pinoys now open to Charter change but Church unmoved

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christian V. Esguerra

A NEW SURVEY SAYS FILIPINOS ARE MORE open-minded about amending the Constitution but a Church group says unless this is accompanied by a change in the people's character it will be a meaningless exercise.

PINOYS/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, January 12, 2006 ★★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 35 P18 website: www.inq7.net

# SWS: 54% want GMA to quit before term ends 2010

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ONE OF TWO FILIPINOS WANT PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo to relinquish power before her term expires in 2010 as proposed by former President Fidel Ramos, a survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) released yesterday said.

The survey was conducted from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4 last year to get the public's pulse on the proposed shift from the existing presidential to the parliamentary system, the SWS said.

The SWS said Ms Arroyo's stepping down was included among the questions because Ramos had proposed this last July to resolve the issue of legitimacy sparked by revelations in the "Hello Garci" wiretaps that she allegedly rigged the May 2004 election.

The SWS said the Ramos proposal was the most popular among five component ideas for constitutional change tested in the December 2005 SWS survey *(Related story above)*.

It said that the new Charter change elements put forward by the Consultative Commission such as the proposal to scrap the 2007 election would be covered in upcoming surveys.

The original Ramos proposal, made amid mounting calls for the President's resignation, was for Ms Arroyo to step aside in May this year. On Monday, Ramos gave her an extension, up to June 2007, saying he did not factor in the impeachment attempts against Ms Arroyo in his first proposal.

The SWS survey, through face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults nationwide, showed that 54 percent of respondents approved of the Ramos proposal for the President to leave office before her term ends in 2010. This was nearly thrice the 20 percent who thumbed down the Ramos proposal.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents, who approved of Ms Arroyo leaving office, wanted her to do so as early as 2005, 30 percent this year, 8 percent in 2007, and 6 percent in either 2008 or 2009, the poll showed.

The SWS survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Malacañang has said that Ms Arroyo has a mandate to serve out her six-year

SWS/ A6

# ABS-CBN sacks 'Kabayan' show

## Noli's support of GMA behind differences

By Marinel R. Cruz, Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

THE LONG-RUNNING SHOW "MAGANDANG Gabi, Bayan" was pulled off the air because of Vice President Noli de Castro's "problems" with ABS-CBN management regarding his support for President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to a network insider.

The insider told the INQUIRER in a phone interview on Sunday that the Lopezes, owners of ABS-CBN, had "wanted to use" the weekly current affairs program "to attack the administration."

"When Mr. De Castro refused, it was made clear to him, 'Either help us or leave,'" said the insider, who is close to De Castro and his wife Arlene, and who asked not to be named for fear of loss of employment.

"Magandang Gabi, Bayan" (MGB) had its last show last Dec. 31, ending a run of close to 18 years that made De Castro famous as "Kabayan" and helped launch his political career.

It was produced by Bayan Productions, which is run by De Castro's wife, Arlene de Castro.

The last show was coanchored by the De Castros' daughter, Katherine, with Erwin Tulfo and

ABS-CBN SACKS/ A7

### ABS-CBN: False and insulting

MARIA RESSA, HEAD OF ABS-CBN's news and current affairs, responded last night to questions regarding the cancellation of "Magandang Gabi, Bayan."

These were her comments:

- On the statement of an INQUIRER source that MGB was pulled off the air because Vice President Noli de Castro refused

ABS-CBN/ A7

THE TIES THAT bind Vice President Noli de Castro so tightly to the giant TV network have unraveled. So, it's good night and good luck.

## Promotion of two 'Garci' generals hit

By TJ Burgonio, Philip C. Tubeza and Julie S. Alipala

IS IT PAY BACK TIME?

Two Generals linked to the "Hello Garci" tape scandal—Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon and Rear Adm. Tirso Danga—have been appointed to major service commands, drawing objections from opposition legislators.

Gabriel Habacon was named commander of the Southern Command (Southcom) in Mindanao, while Danga was named head of the Western Command in Palawan.

Habacon replaces Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan who retired yesterday. Danga, deputy chief of staff for intelligence, will take the place of Vice Adm. Ruben Domingo, who is retiring on Feb. 14.

"I hope that these reassignments are not all about payback time appointments," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense and security,

PROMOTION/ A4

JESS YUSON

DESPERATE: A P60 daily subsistence allowance provokes sergeants major to break out of the chain of command to ask Senator Biazon for a raise.

## GMA bows to FVR's bid for polls in 2007

By Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo last night agreed to former President Fidel Ramos' demand to proceed with elections in 2007 in a bid to avert confrontation at the weekend caucus of the ruling party, a highly placed source told the INQUIRER.

The source said that the two agreed that Ramos' proposal that Ms Arroyo relinquish power by June 2007 be thrown to the caucus of the Lakas-CMD national directorate on Saturday.

However, Ms Arroyo backed down on Ramos' call for her to reject the recommendation last month by her Consultative Commission to scrap elections in 2007 to pave the way for the institution of a parliamentary system in 2010.

"The (2007) election will go on as scheduled," the source said.

On Monday, the 77-year-old

GMA BOWS/ A6

RAY B. ZAMBRANO, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

THREE TONS of eggplants are grilled along the national road in Villasis, Pangasinan, as part of the celebration of its fiesta and its self-designated title as the country's "Vegetable Bowl."

## Ex-bar girl now helps others escape trap

HONG KONG—WHEN SHIPS CARRYING thousands of American servicemen sailed into the American naval base in the Philippines at Subic Bay for routine port calls during the 1980s, it was not just the shore crews who were ready for their arrival.

Greeting them was blasting rock music from hundreds of bars in nearby Olongapo City, and inside were thousands of call girls waiting for their next uniformed "trick." Among them was Minda Pascual.

"The bar owners would announce that a big ship was coming in and they always said that we should look our best for the customers," Pascual recalls.

It was a reception the seamen eagerly awaited after months at sea. But behind the parties and the colorful neon lights, and hidden by the girls' smiles, makeup and scandalously short skirts, lurked intense misery.

Most of the 16,000 women estimated to have worked the bars around America's largest overseas naval base were forced into the sex industry.

Far from the lip-glossed world of Suzy Wong and the other "happy hookers" of fictionalized Asia, the experience of Pascual and her colleagues was anything but fun. During eight years as a call girl in Olon-

EX-BAR GIRL/ A5

PRESIDENT ARROYO asks about the Laguindingan Airport Development Project from Misamis Oriental Gov. Oscar Moreno (right) and Cagayan de Oro Mayor Vicente Emano at Barangay Moog, Laguindingan, Misamis Oriental. Costing $107.70 million, it's the third airport to be constructed in Region 10 to meet the growing aviation traffic in the Cagayan de Oro City-Iligan corridor. LYN RILLON

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**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Mindanao will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy.

COMPILED BY CYRIL L BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/12/06 SOURCE PAGASA

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iloilo/Bacolod | Partly Cloudy |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Roxas | Partly Cloudy |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Partly Cloudy |
| Laoag | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Cloudy with Rains |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Gen. Santos | Partly Cloudy |
| Tagaytay | Partly Cloudy | Zamboanga | Partly Cloudy |
| Legazpi | Partly Cloudy | Cagayan de Oro | Partly Cloudy |
| Calapan | Partly Cloudy | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

# New impeachment war looms

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL ARROYO'S OPPONENTS said yesterday they would pursue another impeachment effort against her and warned that the protracted crisis would not end unless she answered vote-rigging allegations.

Ms Arroyo survived an impeachment bid in September after her allies in the House of Representatives blocked it on a technicality and dismissed all three complaints against her. But coup rumors have persisted and opposition lawmakers have continued investigating vote-rigging and corruption allegations against her.

Rep. Ronaldo Zamora said he and other opposition lawmakers would file the same impeachment complaint, possibly with some additional charges, after a one-year ban lapses in June. The Constitution prohibits more than one impeachment complaint against the President in 12 months.

But an opposition lawyer, Oliver Lozano, contended he could revive his complaint, which was among those dismissed by the House, as early as this month, saying disgruntled troops could mount a coup against Arroyo if the political impasse dragged on without a clear prospect of a legal resolution.

### No end in sight

"These impeachment efforts would never stop until she answers whether she really lied, stole or cheated," Lozano said.

The vote-rigging accusations intensified in June with the emergence of audio recordings of phone conversations where Ms Arroyo purportedly discussed with a former Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano how to ensure a million-vote victory in the 2004 election.

Ms Arroyo apologized for talking with an elections official but denied she tampered with election results. The accusations set off her worst crisis and prompted 10 Cabinet members to resign and some of her key allies to back away.

The President supporters have hit her critics for reviving old allegations, saying the opposition was kicking a "dead horse." The prospects of any new impeachment complaint are dim, given her allies' strong majority in the House, they said.

Zamora acknowledged Filipinos were already aware of the charges, but said they have not seen the opposition's mounting evidence against the President.

Opposition lawmakers would struggle to gain the support of one-third, or 79 members, of the House, the number needed to automatically bring an impeachment complaint to the Senate for trial, he said, adding he was more confident this time because they have had more time to prepare. The opposition has a strong presence in the 23-member Senate.

Zamora said opposition lawmakers would also seek to overhaul the House's impeachment rules to prevent Ms Arroyo's allies from killing an impeachment complaint on a technicality.

### Fertilizer scam

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said that the new impeachment complaint would include the fertilizer scam currently being investigated by the Senate and Virgilio Garcillano's admission that he talked with Ms Arroyo on May 24, 2004 at the height of the canvassing of votes.

One of Ms Arroyo's staunchest allies in the House, Rep. Prospero Pichay of Surigao del Sur, said any new impeachment attempt would be "doomed from the start since (it) would basically contain the same unfounded charges filed by the same group pushing for her impeachment since last year." AP, with a report from Michael Lim Ubac

# *Drilon prods SC on GMA gag order*

By Daisy C.L. Mandap
*Contributor*

HONG KONG – SENATE PRESIDENT Franklin Drilon has called on the Supreme Court to act quickly on the petition challenging the constitutionality of Executive Order 464, which prohibits officials from the executive, military, and police from testifying in congressional inquiries without the President's permission.

Drilon said the case provides an opportunity for newly appointed Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban to prove his court's independence.

"The first test of the Panganiban court will be how they will handle this case," he said.

According to Drilon, the controversial directive has effectively thwarted attempts by the Senate to probe deeper into corruption allegations against the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"EO 464 erodes the system of checks and balance in government," he says. "They (justices) must decide on the petition immediately, one way or the other."

Drilon said he was in Hong Kong to take a respite from the simmering political conflict in the Philippines, and not to meet with other opposition groups to hatch destabilization plots.

But he was clearly kept up to date on the political developments back home.

"I received information before I left that (former President Fidel) Ramos would make a major announcement concerning President Arroyo," he said.

That announcement, made Monday, included a call for President Arroyo to voluntarily step down and stand for election instead of hanging on to power.

Ramos provided a time frame of up to June 30 next year during which amendments to the Constitution allowing for a shift to the parliamentary system would be made and submitted to a plebiscite, and elections held.

Drilon said that with his pronouncements, Ramos has emerged as the newest figure in the opposition.

"You can expect Ramos to work on new alliances, but it's too early to say what will happen next," Drilon said.

But this early, he said he has already heard of several politicians currently aligned with the President who are thinking of going over to Ramos' side, but would not name names.

Drilon said it pays to be patient in times like these, when events are fast building up. But he is clearly looking forward to another impeachment complaint against President Arroyo being filed once the one-year waiting period after the filing of the first one has lapsed.

# Town official probed for aiding NPA rebs

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE WARNED LOCAL OFFICIALS YESterday against supporting communist rebels and revealed that an official of the town of Loreto in Agusan del Sur was under investigation for allegedly conniving with New People's Army guerrillas who raided the town last month.

Two police officers were killed in the Dec. 21 attack, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said, adding that Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao was "greatly dismayed" by reports that a municipal official had allegedly assisted the rebels.

The PNP spokesperson did not identify the official or elaborate on how the official had connived with the rebels. Bataoil added that police were also investigating a report that a government vehicle was used by the rebels during the attack.

"General Lomibao is greatly dismayed by this," Bataoil said. "He has let his disappointment known and has asked local officials to choose between serving the people and government, and conniving with the enemy."

Bataoil said Lomibao visited the Loreto police station yesterday and told local officials that "They should fight alongside and help government troops."

The NPA has recently intensified attacks on police and military targets, leading to the death of several policemen and soldiers during the last two weeks. The rebels have also attacked several telecommunication centers in Central Luzon.

During his visit to Loreto, Lomibao promoted posthumously the two cops killed while fighting off the rebel attack. They were identified as PO2 Juliet Mendoza and PO2 Rommel Avenido. Another officer, SPO1 Nelson Mendez, was wounded, Bataoil said.

Reports said the rebels arrived on board four vehicles, including the alleged government vehicle, a van, and caught the police station by surprise. But the cops chose to fight back, according to Bataoil.

He said Lomibao had increased the station's personnel and that soldiers were also now guarding the town.

"Before he left, Lomibao urged local officials to help the military and the police in their fight against the communist rebels," Bataoil said.

# Immigration, not Big Brother, calls 2 'house mates'

By Leila B. Salaverria

THIS TIME, IT'S NOT BIG BROTHER CALLing.

Media personalities Sam Milby, an American, and Uma Barum, an Israeli, have been summoned to appear before Bureau of Immigration officials, who are not amused by their numerous show business outings.

Milby and Barum were asked to come to the bureau office in Manila on Friday and may face sanctions for allegedly working in the country without a permit.

The two gained celebrity for being among the 13 contestants on the recently-concluded Pinoy Big Brother TV show, where they were sequestered in a house and followed the orders of a disembodied voice known as Big Brother.

Since the show concluded, Milby and Barum have appeared on various ABS-CBN shows. Milby also scored a modeling stint with the clothing company Bench.

According to BI executive director Roy Almoro, Milby and Barum would be asked why deportation proceedings should not be initiated against them for illegally working in the Philippines.

# Airlines buck new luggage handling rule

By Nikko Dizon

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES OPERATING AT THE NINOY Aquino International Airport threatened yesterday to bring their complaints against the airport's new luggage handling regulations known as "100-percent sanitized luggage" before the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

"We will consult with the ICAO this procedure, to get it straight from the horse's mouth," Leoncio Nakpil, chair of the Airline Operators Council (AOC), told reporters yesterday.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) has invoked ICAO rules in implementing the new luggage checking procedure. The ICAO issues aviation guidelines, including security measures, for its all its contracting states.

But the AOC voiced suspicion that the new procedure was imposed by the US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Authority (TSA), which also operates in the country.

Nakpil said that the new procedure is intended mainly for US-bound flights, as the US was considered a primary target of terrorists in the wake the 9/11 attacks.

"The Miaa caters too much to the TSA," Nakpil said. "This is not the case in other international airports like Singapore and Hong Kong. They implement their own security measures, which prove to be effective, too."

Under the new regulations, passengers are not allowed to handle their luggage after it has gone through the initial X-ray screening upon entering the airport terminal. Only airport porters are authorized to move the luggage to holding area were the luggage is segregated according to flight.

The porters would then bring the luggage from the holding area to the airline counters as the passengers check in.

The AOC has protested the procedure, saying it would result in lost luggage, delayed flights, and inconvenience passengers, rendering the airlines vulnerable to lawsuits.

Angel Atutubo, Miaa assistant general manager for emergency and security services, denied that the new procedure was influenced by the US security agency and insisted it was provided for by ICAO's guidelines on screening luggage.

# Sans wildlife plan, Boracay resort faces fine

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE $75-million Shangri-La Resort and Spa on world-renowned Boracay Island could hit a snag as a government team found that the hotel chain has not submitted a program to preserve the wildlife in the fragile ecosystem.

The Environmental Management Bureau said Shangri-La violated a provision of its environmental compliance certificate because of the absence of an approved wildlife preservation program.

EMB inspector Ricardo D. Benjamin Jr., who visited the project site in barangay Yapak, has recommended the filing of a notice of violation against Boracay Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts Inc.

He also said the company should be compelled to explain why it should not be fined P50,000 for the violation of its ECC. He said a technical conference with the project proponent would be called soon.

"The proponent has violated their ECC condition No. 8 as they have not submitted to this office their program that will protect and preserve the wildlife in the area," Benjamin, EMB focal person in Boracay, said in a memo to the regional office dated Jan. 9.

ECC condition No. 8 requires Shangri-La to come up with a program that will protect and preserve the wildlife in the area of the project site.

It also mandates the project proponent to ensure that the "development of road network and other amenities will be designed in such a way that there will be minimal impact to the habitat.

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# Rebels release sarge; AFP says he was rescued

SGT. MARLON ORONAN at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

REM ZAMORA

**By Tonette Orejas,** *PDI Central Luzon Desk*, **and Alcuin Papa, Luigi A. del Puerto and Nikko Dizon** *in Manila*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—NEW People's Army rebels in Pampanga freed on Tuesday night a Marine sergeant after holding him captive for nearly two months.

But Marine Corps officials claimed that they actually rescued TSgt. Marlon Oronan at the domestic airport yesterday as he was being transported by NPA rebels to Mindanao. It was not immediately clear which version of events was correct.

Oronan was released to San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto at 11 p.m. at the Mother of Good Counsel seminary here, according to Sister Cecille Ruiz, Central Luzon chair of the human rights group Karapatan, and Tito Mendiola, PhilHealth vice president for Central Luzon.

Oronan was later reunited with his wife Lilia inside the seminary, Ruiz said.

The release of Oronan was confirmed by Sr. Supt. Leonardo Espina, Pampanga provincial police chief.

"He's safely back with his family," Espina told reporters, adding Oronan was on his way to rejoin his military unit stationed in Mindanao.

Oronan was abducted by NPA rebels near his house in Barangay Pulong Masle in Guagua town on Nov. 23 last year. He was on furlough at the time. Last month, rumors had circulated that Oronan was executed.

The NPA's Josefino Corpuz command in Pampanga told the INQUIRER that Oronan was freed after he was cleared of crimes.

But top Marine officials had a different version on how Oronan gained his freedom.

Marine Chief of Staff Col. Orlando de Leon told a press conference that Oronan was rescued by fellow Marines from his NPA captors as he was about to board a flight to Cagayan de Oro City at the Manila Domestic Airport at around 7:00 a.m. yesterday.

Oronan was presented to the media during the press briefing sporting a moustache and wearing a blue shirt and jeans. "I am okay. They did not hurt me," Oronan told reporters.

The soldier said he was treated well by his captors while in captivity and was fed "musang" (wild cat), "bayawak" (big lizards), and noodles.

According to De Leon, Oronan was being escorted by NPA rebels who managed to escape after the Marines decided not to engage them in a gunfight.

But De Leon did not explain how armed NPA rebels could enter the airport without being detected given the tight security.

Even a domestic airport official expressed surprise after he was told that the operation was actually the rescue of Oronan from his NPA captors.

De Leon said the Marines wanted to avert a gunfight to prevent civilian casualties and to ensure the safety of Oronan's wife. While Oronan was being transported to Cagayan de Oro, De Leon said NPA rebels were simultaneously holding his wife hostage in Guagua. But she was recovered from the rebels at around 11:45 a.m. also yesterday.

De Leon added that the NPA had planned to release Oronan in Cagayan de Oro City "or somewhere in Mindanao."

"We were able to disrupt their plan. We were able to get him at the domestic airport. There was no encounter and there were no apprehensions (of the NPA rebels) because of several considerations. We made sure that nobody knew about what was happening for security reasons," De Leon said.

# Aging US widow, Pinoy found dead in suicide pact

SAN FRANCISCO—A 106-YEAR-OLD WIDOW and the 30-year-old man who took care of her for years killed themselves in an apparent suicide pact, police in San Francisco said Tuesday.

The bodies of the two—Helen Godet and her caretaker of nine years, Filipino native David Lund —were found on Friday in a house they shared in the West Coast US city, officers said.

They left notes dated Dec. 27 indicating that Lund had strangled the widow when she decided she could not take her own life, then swallowed a fatal dose of antifreeze himself, police said. *AFP*

# Prosecution exasperated by delays in Erap trial

**By Nelson F. Flores**

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR DENNIS Villa-Ignacio said yesterday he was planning to ask the Sandiganbayan Special Division to terminate hearings in the five-year-old plunder trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada and deem the case submitted for resolution should defense lawyers fail to present any more witnesses.

A visibly exasperated Villa-Ignacio bared the plan after yesterday's hearing which, in the absence of any witness, Presiding Justice Teresita De Castro adjourned after asking some clarificatory questions concerning a motion recently submitted by Estrada's lawyers.

Villa-Ignacio said the failure of the prosecution to present any witness yesterday, an increasingly frequent occurrence in recent months, was an indication that the defense had run out of witnesses. He said that should this continue next week, the prosecution would be forced to ask the court to "consider the case submitted for resolution."

Villa-Ignacio said Estrada's lawyers should already put the former President on the witness stand, as they had said they planned to do at some stage, if they no longer had anyone else to present. He said delaying the proceedings seemed to be the strategy of the defense panel since the start of the trial.

"They are wasting time," Villa-Ignacio said, noting that the prosecution had rested its case as early as 2003 after presenting more than 2,000 pieces of documentary and testimonial evidence. After a delay of more than a year, the trial resumed in late 2004 with Estrada's lawyers presenting evidence in his defense.

Former Senator Rene Saguisag, one of Estrada's lawyers, called Villa-Ignacio's plan a "kenkoy" or laughable motion and dared him to make such a pleading. He said the prosecutor knew that such a motion would not prosper because it would violate Estrada's right to due process.

"It is not our fault if we don't have witnesses to present," Saguisag said. "The court has yet to rule on our urgent motion seeking a ruling on the different motions to quash subpoena filed by witnesses who refused to testify in behalf of President Joseph Estrada because there is a perception that taking the witness stand in behalf of Estrada is a suggestion that one is fighting the government," Saguisag explained.

"Villa-Ignacio just wants publicity," Saguisag added in Filipino.

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# No more asking husband "do I look fat?"

"Do I look fat?" is something she won't have to ask her husband again. Lyn Ching-Pascual is enthused with how Marie France shaped her body from a huge American size 10 to a sexy size 4 in just two months. Twelve pounds lighter, she can now dress any way she wants. She can show off her body in fitted clothes without feeling self-conscious of excess bulges. "Slimming down has definitely changed my life. It's so much easier now to move around and I'm more confident when dressing up. I don't have to wear black all the time. I can dress in white or any other color because I know I look good", says a proud Lyn.

"People compliment me every single day. My friends congratulate me because for the first time in my life I have become sexy!" For Lyn, who has been fat all her life, compliments are certainly music to her ears. "I was an obese child. I weighed 140 lbs when I was only 10 years old. It was so bad it got to a point that my skin gave up on me. I had stretch marks on my legs – at 10 years old! Imagine that!"

When she got older, Lyn went through different weight-loss methods. "Yo-yo dieting... gym (I'd workout religiously for months, then stop)...badminton (I'd play everyday, lose weight, then stop)... it got to a point when I was on the verge of an eating disorder. I looked really, really sick: dry skin... I wasn't moving too much because I was always tired... I couldn't breathe well... I had a lot of problems at that time. Plus, I really love food! That's why it's so hard for me to go on a diet. Surgical options? Honestly, I would choose to have surgery only if my life depended on it. Because I know something can still be done to get the body I want without resorting to drastic measures. Also every time you go under the knife, there's always a possibility something might go wrong. I'm not willing to take that chance."

That's why she couldn't have been happier when she enrolled at Marie France. She lost a lot of weight without having to resort to invasive procedures or crash diets. "I'm very happy because I can still eat whatever I want. I have a sweet tooth so I eat 2 bags of caramel popcorn everyday – and I never miss a day." Now, everybody's asking how she did it. With a smile, she unabashedly utters the words "Marie France."

She adds, "Their treatments are very easy, very fast, very safe, and very convenient for me. After the show *(Unang Hirit)* which ends at around 8:30-8:45am, I go straight to Marie France. They open early so there's no problem regarding schedule. It's very convenient because whatever I wear when I arrive, I can also wear when I leave. I don't have to take a bath or time to rest after a heavy workout. At Marie France, you just lie down and everyone else does the work for you. I can sleep and rest while losing weight. Where can you get that kind of deal?"

"People from the audience... the show... they tell me that I look good... really good. Even a close friend of mine said, 'I have never seen you this thin before'. That's because before, when I used to workout a lot, I lost weight but I looked bulky. I lost pounds but not inches. With Marie France, I lose both pounds AND inches," Lyn stressed.

To women who want to finally get rid of those excess pounds this new year, Lyn has this to say, "Don't do anything else, just Marie France. You will lose weight while sleeping. Do something for yourself. Go to Marie France because your weight-loss is going to last and it will make you happy for sure. It made me happy."

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# Promotion of two 'Garci' generals hit

From page A1

said at a press briefing.

Biazon rued that the military top brass made the appointments even before they could show proof to Congress that they had wrapped up their own inquiry into these officials' involvement in the wiretapping scandal.

Habacon, together with Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and retired Maj. Gen. Roy Kyamko, was mentioned in the Garci tapes.

Rep. Roilo Golez had linked Danga to the Garci tape scandal, saying he recruited the agents of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines suspected of wiretapping the President's conversations.

The "Hello Garci" tapes contained conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly conspired to rig the results of the May 2004 presidential election.

In one of the conversations, Garcillano said General Habacon still did not know much about matters pertaining to changes in election returns.

## Choices of field commands

"The issue has not been properly and credibly resolved," Biazon said, noting that Gen. Generoso Senga, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, had yet to submit a report on the completion of the inquiry to his committee.

"There's no resolution of the issue. And here comes Habacon being given the choicest of field commands," he said.

Biazon had opened an inquiry into the national security aspect of the wiretapping scandal and is resuming it on Jan. 19.

Senga said the Garci tapes were not considered at all in the deliberations of the Board of Generals (BOG).

"The contents of the 'Hello Garci' tapes remain allegations. There has been no formal charge filed against anybody so it would not be fair for Habacon if the BOG considered it for the selection," Senga said.

## Sterling qualities

He said Habacon was named Southcom chief because of "his qualification, his knowledge and experience in Mindanao [and his] sterling qualities.

"Besides, he is the most senior (among those who were considered)," Senga told the INQUIRER.

Habacon ranked 20th and Danga 26th, respectively, on the list of seniority among major generals, according to Biazon.

The senator said the appointments of Danga and Habacon could raise more questions because they were not the most senior officials for the posts.

Habacon's appointment to a new post less than a year before he retires in September was also questionable, according to Biazon.

Senga said Habacon's qualification made him the "right choice" to lead Southcom.

The BOG deliberated lengthily on who was the appropriate choice for the post, according to the AFP chief of staff.

Lt. Cmdr. Earl Pabalan, assistant chief of the AFP Public Information Office, also defended the designation of Danga as Wescom commander, saying it was a product of careful consideration by the BOG.

"That was decided collectively by the BOG and approved by the Commander in Chief based on the professional and overall qualifications," Pabalan said.

## No field experience

But Biazon doubted whether Danga had accumulated the experience required by the Wescom post.

"As far as I know Danga had no field command experience, had no command at sea experience and his staff assignment experience was purely on intelligence," he said.

## No field experience

"Western Command requires field command experience. So what we are seeing here seemingly is a disregard to the minimum requirements in the selection of officers for advancement in rank and position."

Golez, House deputy minority leader, also criticized the appointment of Danga to the Wescom, saying there were "serious doubts about his moral, physical or psychological competence."

"There are so many questions about him. There are accusations that he is not healthy—that he went through cancer treatment—and is emotionally unstable—(he) cries a lot," Golez said.

## 'Central to drama'

Golez noted that Danga had yet to fully explain his role in the Garci tapes. The congressman earlier said that Danga "is a central character in this drama."

"Anyway, his appointment needs confirmation by the (Commission on Appointments). I hope the confirmation process doesn't break him," Golez said.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, former lead chair of the "Hello Garci" House inquiry, and Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico said Habacon should not have been appointed because the allegations of election cheating against him remained unresolved.

"Whether the (Hello Garci) tapes are true or not, (Habacon's) appointment is somehow a confirmation that (he and Ms Arroyo) are close. This brings to fore the necessity for closure to this issue either from the point of view of Congress or the (AFP)," Escudero said.

Like Biazon, Escudero noted that the AFP had yet to release the results of its investigation of the alleged involvement of generals in irregularities in the May 2004 elections.

"The AFP has yet to release its findings and that is why there are doubts about him. They should hurry with it because (Habacon's appointment) might tarnish the AFP's reputation and send the wrong signal—that this is payment for a political debt—which might be unfair," Escudero said.

## Demoralization

Remulla warned that Habacon's appointment would only worsen the demoralization within the military.

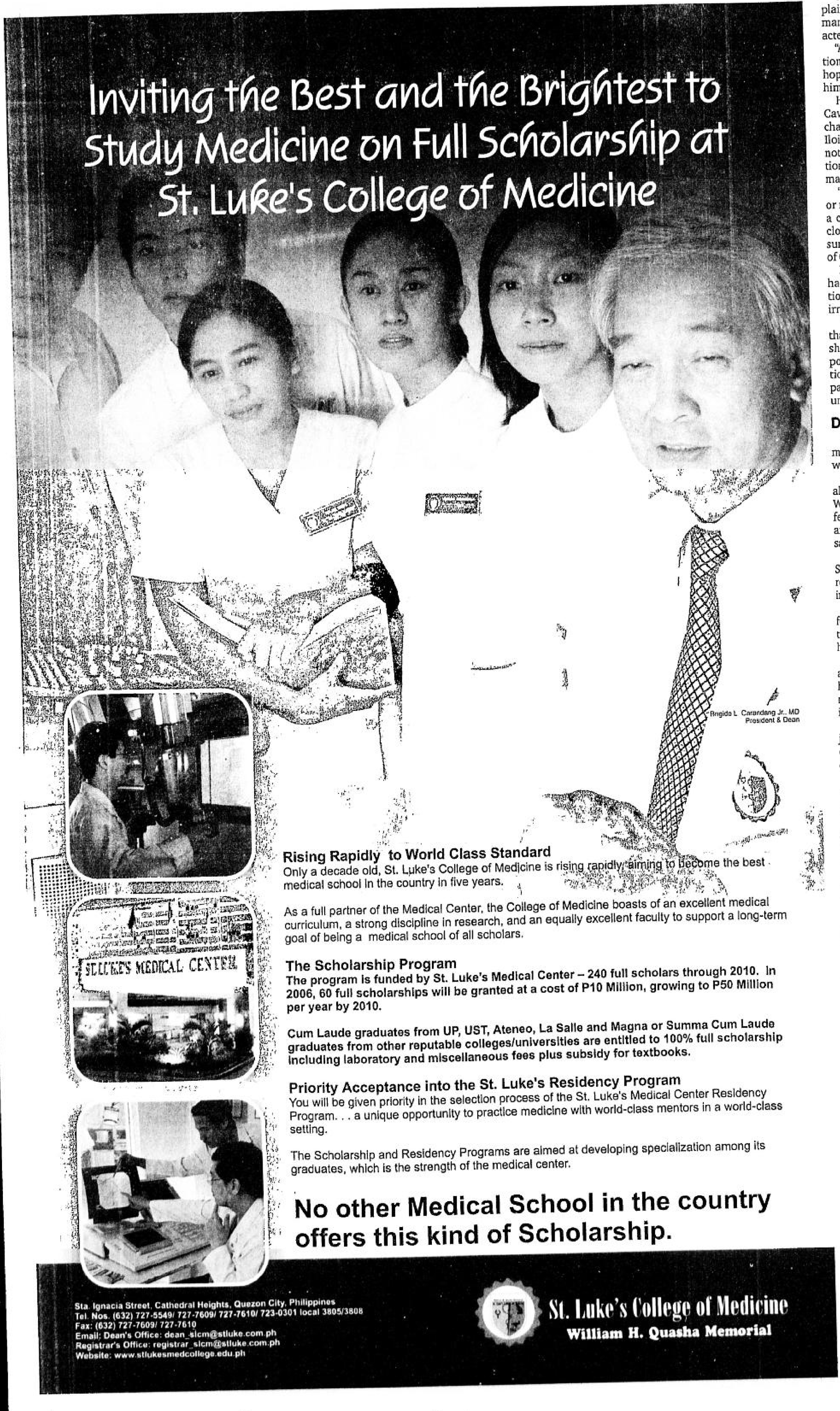
"The administration never learns. They really do not care about credibility and honor. What they do not realize are the long-term effects of this blatant disregard for propriety and the need to be above suspicion," Remulla said.

Suplico said Habacon's designation as Southcom chief "institutionalizes military terrorism during elections. Habacon should be in the stockade; not in Southcom."

Habacon said the controversy did not affect him at all. "It's very unfortunate that there are those who want to sow intrigues," he said.

Lawmakers with objections to Danga's appointment can raise the issues against him before the Commission on Appointment or the committee on defense, according to Pabalan.

"There are proper venues to lodge any objection or complaint. That's the usual procedure," Pabalan said. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*



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**1st Reading:** 1 S 4:1-11
**Gospel:** Mark 1:40-45

A leper came to Jesus and begged him, "If you so will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." The leprosy left the man at once and he was made clean. As Jesus sent the man away, he sternly warned him, "Don't tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest and for the cleansing brings the offering ordered by Moses; in this way you will make your declaration."

However, as soon as the man went out, he began spreading the news everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter any town. But even though he stayed in the rural areas, people came to him from everywhere.

**Commentary**

*We hear the story of the ark of the Lord, the presence of Yahweh coming into the camp of the Israelites and the awful reality of losing not only the battle, but the ark of God as well. Just because God is with us does not mean that we will not suffer, or that we know or understand God among us. A leper cries out to Jesus with his prayer: "If you will to do so, you can cure me." And Jesus does will it. His body obeys Jesus' words of cleansing but he does not obey Jesus' word and so Jesus is forced to stay out in the desert places because the uncleanliness of the leper is now his own. But those in need keep coming, breaking all the rules, traditions and ways of approaching God. Do we know God's ways among us?*

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# Ex-bar girl now helps others escape trap

From page A1

gapo and Manila, Pascual says she was raped, beaten, forced into drug addiction and driven to the brink of suicide by abusive clients, pimps and bar owners.

"I would have to take drugs because I could not accept what they would do to me unless I was high," she says of her days as a sex worker, when she masked her pain through marijuana and methamphetamine hydrochloride, a stimulant popularly known as "shabu" or "ice."

"If I didn't have drugs I couldn't work. I couldn't dance or loosen up enough to show my body," she says. "Every time I felt depressed, I felt suicidal. But every time I used the drugs and alcohol, I felt happier."

## New life

Pascual has since pulled herself from the vicious cycle of poverty that beats a well-trodden path to prostitution. Now she counsels younger women who face similar prospects in an industry that, despite the US pullout from Subic Bay in 1992, continues to fester, catering to a new generation of civilian sex tourists.

Her mission brought her to Hong Kong last month for the World Trade Organization summit to highlight the problem of human trafficking and violence against women in the sex trade.

Her aim is simple—to spare other young women the misery she had endured.

"I have to make myself a role model and show them they too can survive without being a prostitute," says Pascual, who visits sex workers in her old stomping ground and tries to persuade them to leave the seedy life behind.

"I know this is a slow process but I want to give them hope and make them realize there are other ways to live and other kinds of jobs they can do," Pascual says.

She knows too well the despair that sucks the helpless women into this life. Twenty years on, Pascual still sheds tears when she tells her story.

## Started at 16

Born in Luzon, Pascual was 16 when she began working the bars, fresh out of high school and with heady dreams of becoming a restaurateur.

She asked her aunt for help in getting her a job. The aunt sold her to a man who pimped her to a massive nightclub of 3,000 girls in Olongapo in return for a cut of her first four months of "wages."

Pascual's "training" was brutal. She was locked in a room for a month, starved and force-fed drugs and alcohol to ensure she was addicted and could be more easily controlled.

"My aunt always said to me I would be going home tomorrow. But it never happened," the 39-year-old recalls.

She was often beaten unconscious for refusing to have sex with customers, but she had no money for hospital treatment. Her old community shunned her.

"I didn't want to save my life anymore. I felt really dirty. People all looked down on me. Even if I wore perfume, had a bath, no matter what I did, people still considered me as dirty. I hated all the things that were going on. They ruined my life," Pascual says.

During her years working the bars, Pascual had five abortions and bore three children by different strangers. She made almost no money as what little she earned was spent on food, babysitting, rent and payoffs to corrupt police to prevent her being arrested.

Leaving the job was not an option.

"I had no choice and needed money and food to survive. I had no dignity. My self-esteem was very low," she says.

Pascual had no one to turn to. She had never met her biological father because he was on constant leave with the military, and her mother no longer made contact with her. The bar owners threatened to kill her if she ran away.

"I was depressed, I was losing my hope. I was intoxicated with drugs and alcohol. I didn't want to think so I let it go on," she says.

## Not unusual case

Jean Enriquez, regional deputy director of Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, says Pascual's story is not unusual in the Philippines. Nor is the problem restricted to Olongapo.

Thousands of women, as well as underaged boys and girls, are stuck in a similar plight across a country that has become one of the major centers for the global sex tourism industry, she says.

According to a report commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund, prostitution is a massive industry and the fourth largest source of income in the Philippines.

Enriquez estimates that at least 400,000 women work in prostitution in the staunchly Roman Catholic country, even though it is illegal. She says poverty in Philippines forces millions of people to seek work abroad—but that's often when they fall into traps set by human traffickers.

"The basic problem is the massive poverty in the country," she says. "A lot of women have no jobs and are desperate for money."

A 2004 study by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes found that family and close friends sometimes helped recruit children for prostitution, some in the genuine belief they were helping the children and family out of poverty.

## On US watchlist

Enriquez says many Filipinos are being transported to Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong, where they work as entertainers, dancers or domestic helpers but often end up sex slaves in nightclubs or massage parlors.

Despite being one of America's strongest allies, the Philippines is on the US human trafficking watchlist, cited as a source, transit point and destination for trafficked women, men and children.

John Miller, the director of the US Department of State tasked with fighting human trafficking, says despite detailed and well-drafted laws against the crime in the Philippines, few prosecutions are brought. He blames poor policing and corruption for hindering any crackdown.

"The biggest challenge facing the Philippines and the area most in need of improvement has been in the law enforcement area," he says.

Enriquez, Pascual and other advocates are fighting to push through a law that decriminalizes prostitution, saying sex workers are stigmatized in the Philippines' conservative society.

"Most of these women in prostitution are victims of human trafficking. They should not be arrested. Those who buy and sell women should be the ones who are punished," Enriquez says.

## Very painful

Leaving Olongapo was not easy for Pascual. Without a job, she moved to Manila hoping to find work but only found herself going back to work in a bar.

Eventually she made up her mind to get out of prostitution altogether at the end of 1998.

"I decided not to go back any more as my kids were growing up. I was disappointed with myself but I didn't want them to be disappointed with me," she says.

Pascual found help in Bukal, a support group for female street workers, and other women's organizations that gave her moral support as she finally summoned the courage to quit the bar she worked at—without the threatened retribution she had long feared.

She began working for Bukal. In 2003, she founded a support and campaign group called Bagong Kamalayan Collective that provides counseling services to prostitutes and training on legal issues on the rights of the women.

Pascual says there are thousands of women with similar stories to hers—many sexually abused as a child, as she was, and too embarrassed to talk about their problems.

"Every time I visit these women on the streets, they tell me the same story. They remind me of my past," she says. "This is still very painful for me."

Her group creates alternative jobs for prostitutes, such as making soap and providing catering services to other NGOs.

## Uphill struggle

But Pascual knows too well it is an uphill struggle. Even she is not totally free from her past, despite a year of counseling and a regular stream of antidepressants. She never spoke to her mother again and her biological father was in his 60s by the time she found him.

"He probably knew what happened to me but just didn't want to talk about it. He never asked me what happened," she says. He died last year at the age of 72.

Pascual finds it hard to trust men again, but through friends she found a partner, a company driver. They have been together for six years.

"I even blame him for what happened to me. But he is always so understanding. He often tells me not to look back and that I have to move on with my life. He gives me support every time I feel depressed," she says.

But what really helps Pascual to go forward is her three children, now aged 20, 17 and 7—even though they remind her of her unhappy past. *AFP*

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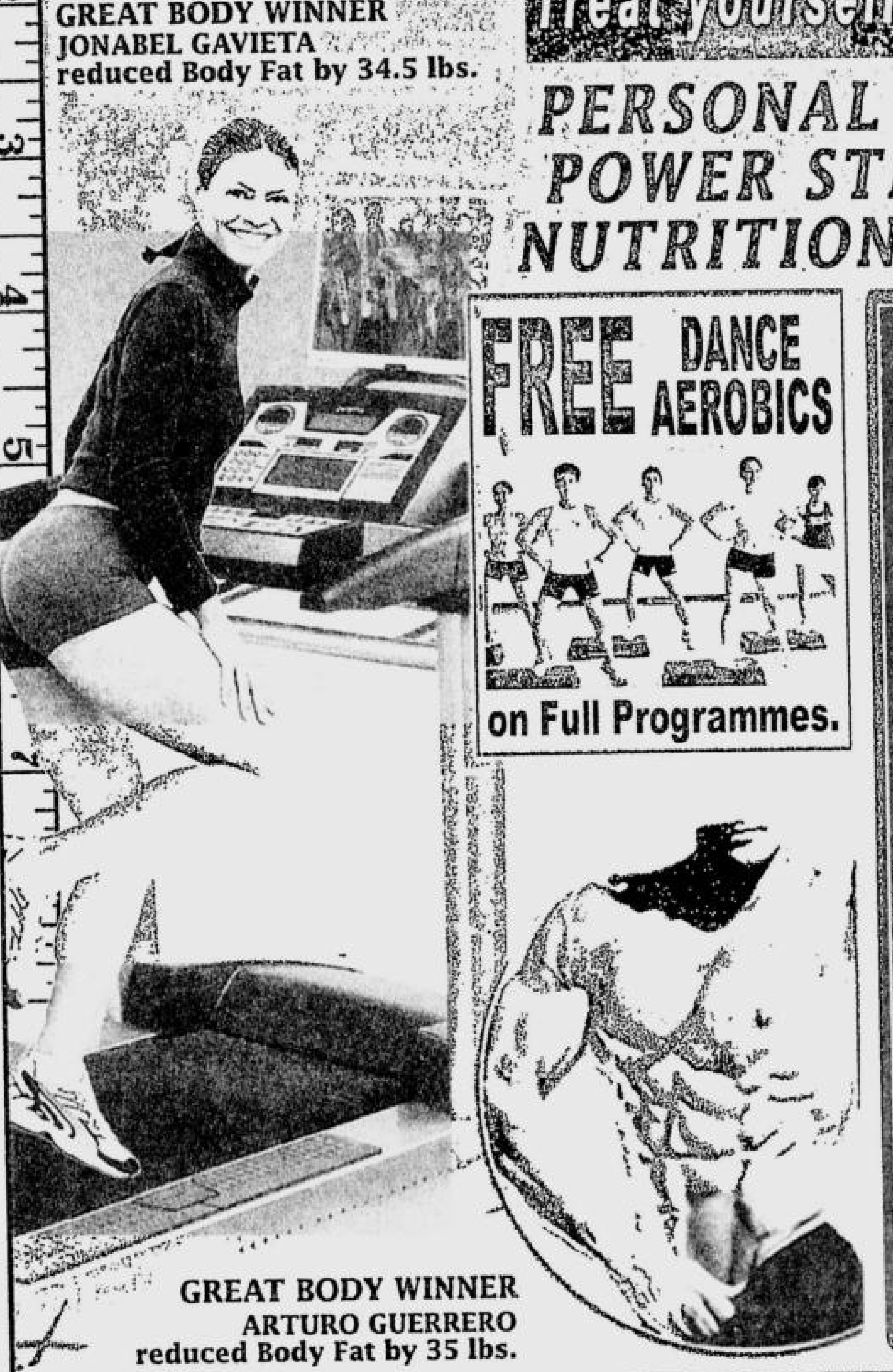

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# GMA bows to FVR's bid for polls in '07

From page A1

Ramos outlined an exit scenario for Ms Arroyo to resolve lingering doubts about her legitimacy sparked by disclosures in the "Hello Garci" wiretaps that indicated she stole the May 2004 election. The plan called on Ms Arroyo to cut short her term in June 2007 and run for a parliament seat.

The meeting in Malacañang, which started at 6 p.m., was arranged by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who was present, along with Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio.

The source said the meeting was an attempt by both Ms Arroyo and Ramos to iron out their differences and ensure a smooth meeting of the Lakas-CMD caucus on Jan. 14. Ramos is Lakas chair emeritus; Ms Arroyo is chair.

Asked about Ms Arroyo giving in to Ramos, Claudio said it was never the President's position to scrap the 2007 election.

"So what is there to back out from. Our position has always been to refer this to Congress," said Claudio, who also declined to confirm or deny that the Malacañang meeting between Ramos and Ms Arroyo took place last night.

### De Venecia flap

"The one who said that probably is not in the know," said Claudio. "The situation is not where one backs off from his or her position."

Claudio said that there was "reasonable agreement and harmony" going into the weekend caucus. "The environment is extremely favorable, not only for the party but also for the whole nation."

Speaker Jose de Venecia was not invited to the Malacañang meeting, which apparently explained why De Venecia issued a television statement, also last night, supporting Ms Arroyo and repudiating Ramos.

De Venecia said no one, including Ramos, had the right to give a deadline for the President and impose his will on her since she has a mandate up to 2010.

The source said the meeting was cordial until the end but that Ramos' temperature "boiled" after he heard De Venecia's statement on television.

De Venecia was at the office of Ramos in Makati Tuesday night where they discussed the French parliament model, without indicating he was against the 2007 deadline given by Ramos to Ms Arroyo to step down and run for a seat in parliament.

### Plan to humiliate Ramos

A Lakas official said Ramos was not interested in running for the proposed parliament and was only after Charter change, and that it was only De Venecia who was pushing for a parliamentary system because he allegedly wanted to be the prime minister.

"Ramos felt bad because De Venecia is driven. De Venecia wants to become prime minister. He issued the statement against Ramos later because he felt he was left out in the Malacañang meeting," the source said.

During the meeting in Malacañang, Ramos confronted Claudio about a draft manifesto which the latter supposedly prepared to humiliate Ramos during the national directorate meeting.

The source said Claudio wanted to make it appear in the manifesto that the majority of Lakas members wanted Ms Arroyo's continued stay in office until 2010.

Also, Ramos questioned the guest list for the national directorate meeting which was supposedly prepared by Claudio. The guest list contained names of Lakas members "who are not supposed to be there."

The membership of the national directorate is limited to original Lakas members and those holding party positions, but Claudio's list included non-original members identified with Ms Arroyo.

### Not an ultimatum

The source also said it was agreed that the manifesto will no longer be presented and that the national directorate meeting will proceed as scheduled.

On the deadline given by Ramos to the President, Ramos clarified to the President that it was not an ultimatum but was simply his timeline for putting in place the necessary elements for a shift to parliamentary system.

# Pinoys now open to Charter change but Church unmoved

From page A1

The Social Weather Stations poll last month showed that Filipinos were now "neutral" on the proposed shift to the parliamentary system after showing reluctance in the past.

The survey, conducted from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4 last year *(Story below)* covering 1,200 respondents nationwide, showed that 32 percent of Filipinos approved of having the head of government elected by parliamentarians while 32 percent disapproved and 30 percent were undecided.

"This split-opinion result is a marked change from many previous SWS polls which showed a great reluctance of Filipino voters to give up the tradition of voting directly for the President," the SWS said in its statement yesterday.

### Amendments cosmetic

But the local Roman Catholic Church's main election watchdog yesterday slammed moves to amend the Constitution, saying that doing so without transforming the people's character would be like wearing fresh clothes "without even taking a bath."

"Character change must precede Charter change," the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting said in a statement.

"A change in system without a change in men is like a wolf in a sheep's clothing. No matter how unadulterated a constitutional revision may be, if those tasked to implement it are of the same political breeding, then a constitutional change is just a mere cosmetic retouch to a political exercise," the council said.

The SWS survey also showed more Filipinos warming up to one of the most thorny components of Charter change—opening up the economy to more foreign ownership in areas limited to Filipinos such as land, mining, media and public utilities.

The survey showed that 41 percent approved of lessening foreign ownership restrictions or nearly double the 22 percent that disapproved this move. SWS said this marked a significant positive change from a neutral 37 percent approval and 35 percent disapproval in an August 2004 survey on foreign investments.

### Support for regional gov'ts

Another positive result in the fourth quarter survey was that more Filipinos were supportive of forming local governments at the regional level. SWS pointed out this was a prerequisite of a federal system.

The survey showed 38 percent said it was good to have a regional government while 16 percent said it was not good, for a favorable balance of opinion of plus 22 percent. The SWS noted that the positive results were stronger in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon compared to the Visayas and Mindanao.

The SWS, however, noted that a plurality of 46 percent were undecided as to whether their region should have its own elected local government, of higher stature than the present provincial and city and municipal governments.

The SWS explained that it gave respondents one or more questions to several components of Charter change proposals "to predict ratification or rejection of individual amendments, if the electorate were allowed to vote on separate amendments in the plebiscite for the purpose."

But the SWS said that if a new Constitution would be presented for ratification *in toto* to the Filipino people, as was done in February 1987, then it would just give respondents a single "yes" or "no" question in a pre-plebiscite survey.

The latest SWS survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

### Cardinal Sin's project

Started under the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Church poll watchdog had directly monitored the conduct of elections, including the 2004 exercise whose results were allegedly rigged by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

That year, the council had 71,183 poll watchers and 45 supervisors representing 638 parishes nationwide.

The council questioned the motives of those pushing for constitutional changes.

"To doubt the sincerity of these proposed changes may not be unsubstantiated knowing that those who would potentially execute it would benefit from these revisions," the council said.

The council said genuine constitutional reforms should begin with the appraisal of the "traditional framework of power and political elites in this country." Similarly important, it said, was to educate the public in order to determine the public's real sentiment on the raging issue.

### Haste makes waste

"Haste makes waste," it said. "When a doubt surrounding certain provisions still needs to be clarified then prudence must be exercised. We should definitely start discussing the ideological and ontological contents of these recommendations."

"Education and public information campaigns must be established in order to holistically get the pulse of the people," the council said. "More voters education is needed! This will ensure that when and if a referendum is finally in our midst, the Philippine electorate will never be caught unprepared."

# SWS: 54% want GMA to quit before term ends

From page A1

term, which ends in 2010, unless the people sanctioned a shortening of her tenure through constitutional means.

Despite Ramos' call for Ms Arroyo to resign, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday said that Ms Arroyo continued to see Ramos as a "very responsible person, one who will not do anything to destabilize the situation."

"We may have differences but the fact that he is with us in all these meetings as an elder statesman, he is not a liability. He will never be a liability," said Ermita, one of the so-called "Ramos boys" in Malacañang.

Rigoberto Tiglao, former head of the Presidential Management Staff, warned: "The moment she announces that she will cut short her term, an anarchic interregnum will emerge, which will wreck the stability President Arroyo has succeeded in creating."

He said that "media-driven, spur-of-the-moment sentiments culled by pollsters should never substitute for informed political analysis."

The SWS survey said that Filipinos not only wanted the President out of Malacañang before 2010, close to half them also favored barring her from running for prime minister in a parliamentary system.

### No to GMA as PM

The SWS said a plurality of 43 percent disapproved of making Ms Arroyo eligible standing as prime minister or nearly double the 24 percent who wanted her qualified for the job.

Opposition to Ms Arroyo running for prime minister was 44 percent in Metro Manila, 22 percent in the rest of Luzon, 10 percent in Mindanao and 1 percent in the Visayas.

### Cory presses resign call

In three previous SWS surveys since mid-2004, opposition to allowing a previous or sitting President another term ranged from 53 percent to 64 percent.

Former President Corazon Aquino also is pressing for the immediate resignation of Ms Arroyo, said Rafael Lopa, Aquino's spokesperson.

Asked for comment on Ramos' proposal, Lopa said Aquino was reiterating her call last July 8 at the height of the "Hello Garci" crisis for Ms Arroyo to resign for allegedly stealing the May 2004 election.

"This was shelved for a while because of the impeachment complaint against the President," Lopa said. Because the impeachment complaint was killed in the House, Aquino was "back to her July 8 position," said Lopa.

Asked if Aquino would attend the Council of State meeting, Lopa said Aquino had yet to receive an invitation to the gathering that includes former Presidents.

### End politics of cannibalism

In the House, Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin, Representatives Antonio Cuenco of Cebu City and Exequiel Javier of Antique declared support for Ms Arroyo remaining in office.

The three lawmakers said they expected the ruling party to resolve the differences between Ramos, Lakas chair emeritus, and Ms Arroyo, the current Lakas chair, when the party meets on Jan. 14.

Salapuddin, Lakas provincial chair for Basilan, said he was relying on Ramos' statesmanship to ultimately convince him "to give up his own agenda," since pressing for it might only lead him "to a collision course not just with the President but with the Lakas leadership and assembly as well."

"Enough of these politics of cannibalism. I am no fan of FVR but I take cognizance of his great contributions to our country during his presidency. However, if he deviates from the stance of our party, then he must be made to clearly state his stand," Salapuddin said. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeza and Cynthia D. Balana*

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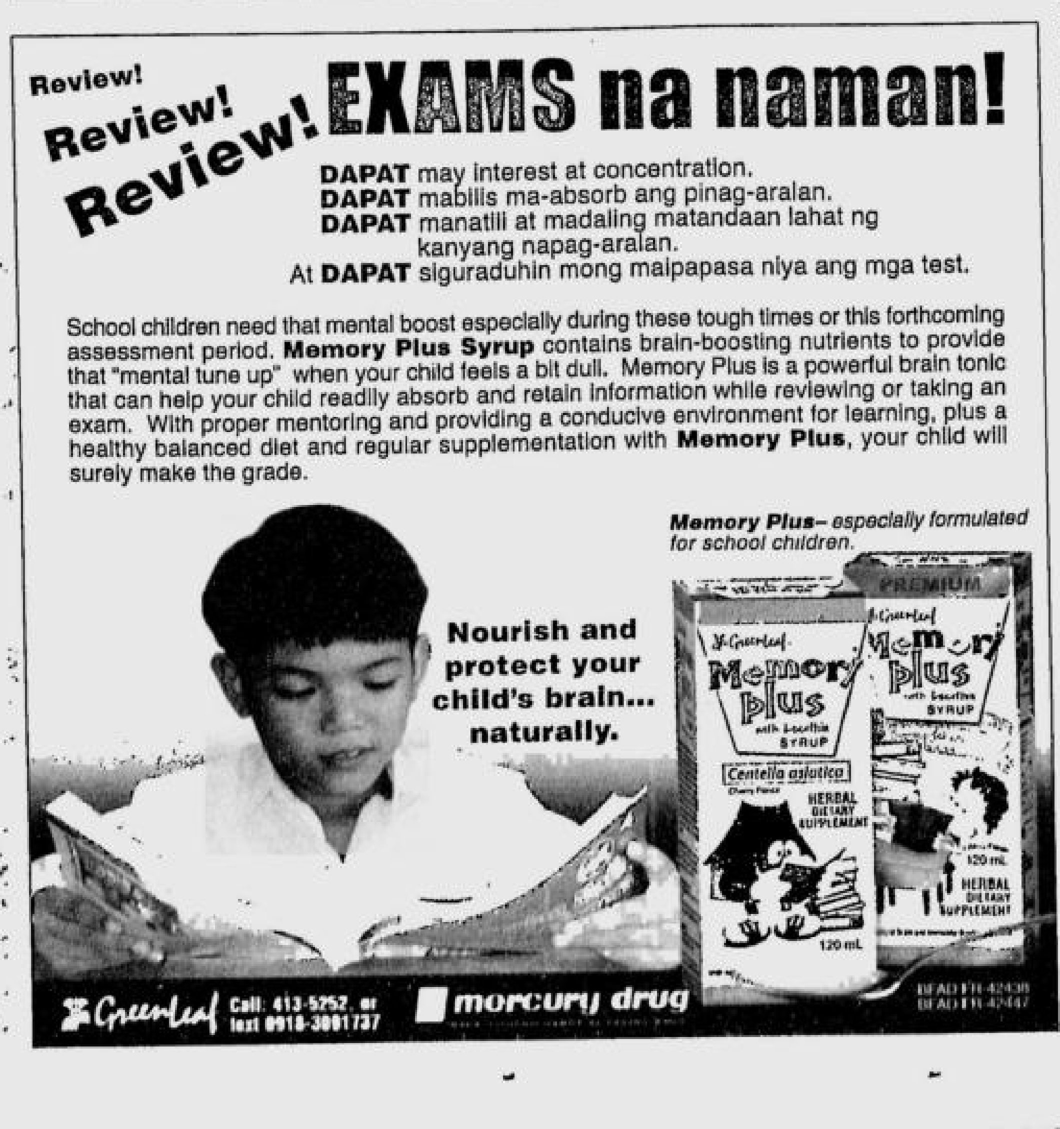

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# Cheap noodles, rice useless . . .

From page A1

the head of the National Food Authority (NFA) said yesterday.

"We feel that we have made the food available, but if the people do not have the money to buy we cannot feed them, we cannot give away these food," NFA Administrator Gregorio Tan said at a briefing in Malacañang.

A survey by the Social Weather Stations last month showed a record high 16.7 percent of Filipinos going hungry for at least one day in three months. At least half of Filipinos live on less than $2 a day (about P105).

Tan said only P500 million of the P35 billion in pump priming funds for the first quarter had been allocated for the NFA to boost sales of subsidized rice and instant noodles to slum areas nationwide.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Augusto Santos said part of the fund would be used for direct food dole-outs to the "poorest of the poor" in urban centers.

### P8.3 billion in losses

Tan said the problem of hunger was two-fold—the supply of affordable food and the purchasing power of Filipinos.

He said NFA's role was primarily to make food available and not to boost the income of Filipinos.

The NFA lost P8.3 billion last year. Tan expected the NFA to lose the same amount this year because it would import the same volume of rice and cater to the same 15 percent of the local rice market.

Tan said that the P35-billion pump-priming fund was already included in the projected P8.3 billion this year.

Tan, however, refused to take responsibility for NFA's heavy losses. "The causes of these losses are not controllable on the part of NFA. Our mandate is to buy high and sell low. Our cost of imports have increased by 109 percent and yet we are selling at the same price," he said.

# AFP enlisted men ask raise in allowance

WORRIED ABOUT SUBSISTING ON a daily meal allowance of only P60, officers and men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines are demanding a raise so they can cope with a higher rate of the expanded value-added tax next month.

The VAT rate is scheduled to be increased from 10 percent to 12 percent on Feb. 1.

"With the implementation of expanded VAT, sardines that used to sell at a little less than P10 now cost P12," said Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, whom a group of sergeants major met yesterday to bring the soldiers' concern to his attention.

Biazon said soldiers may end up malnourished if the soldiers' meal allowance were not increased. "We don't want our soldiers to be weakened because of [malnutrition]," he said.

The senator, who chairs the Senate committee on national defense, urged Malacañang to use part of the P35 billion in savings to raise the meal allowance not only of soldiers but also of policemen, firemen, jail guards and coast guards.

Increasing the meal allowance will cost about P7.5 billion.

### Most important issue

"The government has announced that [the P35 billion in savings] will be used for the poor, including a program of subsidizing rice and noodles," Biazon said.

"The soldiers are also poor and therefore, I'm asking [that] the soldiers be given a share of the P35 billion savings in the form of granting an increase of the P60 day meal allowance to P120," he said.

At a briefing, Biazon, who sat at a table with some of the uniformed sergeants major standing behind him, said: "Last month, the group of sergeants major who are the linkage between the commanders and enlisted ranks made rounds of the units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and gathered the sentiments of the soldiers."

"Singularly, the most important issue raised by the soldiers is the amount of subsistence allowance," he said.

# ABS-CBN sacks 'Kabayan' show

From page A1

Henry Omaga Diaz.

"De Castro's reply to the Lopezes was simple: 'I can't use MGB to attack the administration because I'm part of the administration,'" the insider said.

Yesterday, a reliable source who spoke on condition of anonymity said the Lopezes had asked De Castro to break away from Ms Arroyo, but that the Vice President had yet to respond.

The source cited the cancellation of MGB as proof of the alleged continuing pressure exerted by the Lopezes on De Castro.

According to the source, the Lopezes have declared a "war" on Ms Arroyo, whom they supposedly viewed to be hostile to their business interests.

The family was supposedly particularly piqued by Ms Arroyo's decision to back the efforts of the government-owned National Power Corp. to collect billions of pesos in debts owed by the Lopez-owned Manila Electric Co.

Asked to comment, De Castro said: "*Masakit ang ngipin ko* (I have a toothache)"—employing former President Fidel Ramos' way of saying "No comment."

He said he was not sure whether the removal of the show from the air was politically motivated. He added that MGB, being a line-produced show, could be junked any time by the network.

De Castro also stressed that he had not been connected with MGB in any way since he left it last year and assumed office as Vice President.

But he admitted that talk about the Lopezes' request for him to withdraw support from the President and the axing of MGB had been going around ABS-CBN lately.

Pressed to say something on the issue, De Castro said: "I have no comment at this time."

De Castro has a public service program, "Para Sa Iyo, Bayan," which airs over dzMM every Saturday and for which he has refused to accept compensation.

### Surprised

Per the insider's account, Arlene de Castro met last November with MGB anchors and some staff members at a restaurant in Rockwell, Makati City, to tell them the "sad news."

"They were surprised when they were told that it was over for MGB. Arlene told them that Bayan Productions would not renew the contract with ABS-CBN that expired in December," the insider said, adding:

"Ever since De Castro became Vice President, [the owners wanted to put] politics in the show."

At one point, the insider said, Omaga Diaz was made to host a segment on politics "against Arlene's will," but she complied.

"[But] the strategy didn't work," the insider said. "That segment had to be taken out because the ratings were taking a dive. *Natatalo ng* (the show was losing to the) competition. The ratings of police stories are still stronger."

### 'Time to retire MGB'

Yet another reliable source said ABS-CBN top management called Arlene de Castro early last month to inform her that MGB would have its last airing on Dec. 17.

But two more shows were eventually allowed to run until the swan song on New Year's Eve.

The source—who, like the others, asked not to be named so as to protect himself—said this was probably because the network had no show yet to replace MGB at that time.

The sudden cancellation of the show stunned everybody at the network, the source said.

The source also said the network management had told MGB producers that "it was time to retire" the program.

But the source wondered why MGB was given the boot when the people behind it were supposed to meet with top management in March to decide on the program's fate.

Also, the source said, the cancellation of the show was surprising because it was doing well in terms of ratings and commercials.

"Maybe they wanted to disassociate from Kabayan because of his continued support for President Arroyo," the source said.

Last week, "Kamao," a show on Filipino boxing hosted by Ted Failon, was shown on MGB's time slot.

### No 'GMA factor'

"Kamao" is expected to run for the next three weeks as a prelude to the boxing rematch between the Philippines' Manny Pacquiao and Mexico's Eric Morales.

Lawyer Jesse Andres, De Castro's chief of staff and spokesperson, said there was no "GMA factor" in the decision of ABS-CBN to junk the show.

Andres told the INQUIRER that the show's contract was only up to Dec. 31, 2005, and that it was possible that it was not renewed by the network.

"Block time *lang yang* MGB. ABS-CBN wanted to remove it after Noli left the show to serve as Vice President. Even with the ratings, *medyo iba na rin ang dating* (the show comes out different) without Noli," he said.

Andres said De Castro was no longer part of MGB and had no intention of returning to it because Cabinet members were not allowed to have direct interests in any business.

"The Vice President is not interested [in returning to MGB] at the moment. He still has to serve up to 2010," Andres said.

He also said offers had been made for the show to move to GMA 7, but that he did not know what had happened to the negotiation.

In the matter of the supposed rift between the Lopez family and De Castro regarding the latter's support for Ms Arroyo, Andres said: "I asked the Vice President about it and he said it's definitely not true."

### Mum's the word

Staff members of MGB—there were more than 40, eight of whom were writers—were mum or in the dark about the matter.

Questions were posed: What happened?

"I have no authority to say," said one.

"*Masalimuot* (It's complicated)," said another.

Was it the ratings?

"Of course not! That's not true. We're in the thick of things. *Lumalaban kami* (We're fighting)," said one.

Said another: "Of course not. It has to do with ... No comment. We are not in the know about what happens *sa itaas* (in top echelons)."

Political?

"That's the speculation I'm hearing," said one. "But who are we to say? We cannot speculate on what happens on the highest floors of ABS-CBN."

*With a report from Bayani San Diego Jr.*

## *False, inaccurate and insulting, says ABS-CBN*

From page A1

to go against President Macapagal-Arroyo:

"The statement is inaccurate in every way. First, [MGB] was not quickly pulled off the air. These negotiations went on for months.

"Secondly, MGB is Noli de Castro, and without him, it's a shadow of its former self. We decided to retire the title as well because it's so identified with him. I believe it's time to come up with fresh ideas for that coveted prime-time slot.

"Finally, the paradigm behind the question is insulting because it presupposes that I make decisions in the newsroom because of the alleged vested interests of our owners. My track record shows what we are institutionalizing in ABS-CBN: excellent journalism grounded by a strong Code of Ethics."

- On the statement of an INQUIRER source that De Castro was told to "help us or leave":

"That is false. ABS-CBN News & Current Affairs has no vested interests in the outcome of political events. We report those events but we do not take part in any way."

- On the question of whether the cancellation of MGB would not be perceived as a political move given the present charged atmosphere:

"Anything can be perceived as anything! It was an organizational move, not a political one. That is the reality. Everything else is spin."

The INQUIRER tried to reach other top executives of the network but was unable to get their official statement.

KATHERINE DE CASTRO, MUB coanchor, but the TV network said it wasn't the same without her father. PDI PHOTO

# RTVM official found dead in Palace office

**By Christine O. Avendaño**

A RADIO-TV MALACAÑANG (RTVM) OFFICIAL was found dead yesterday at his office in the presidential palace.

Alex Ontong, 57, head of RTVM's production division, was already dead when a security guard and janitor went to his office early yesterday morning.

According to the RTVM head, Milton Alingod, it was Ontong's wife who alerted RTVM staff members to look into her husband's office at around 5:45 a.m. yesterday because she had been trying to call him on his cell phone since the previous night.

Ontong tended to stay over at his office to do his work, Alingod said.

He said Ontong's wife had initially phoned her husband, a diabetic, Tuesday night to remind him to take his medicine but he did not answer. He failed to answer subsequent calls during the whole night.

He was found lying in the sofa, still clad in his barong tagalog.

The last time a staff member tried to call on Ontong at his office was at 5 p.m. Tuesday. The door was locked and he did not respond, Alingod said.

An autopsy showed that Ontong, who had previous heart operations, suffered a heart attack, Alingod said.

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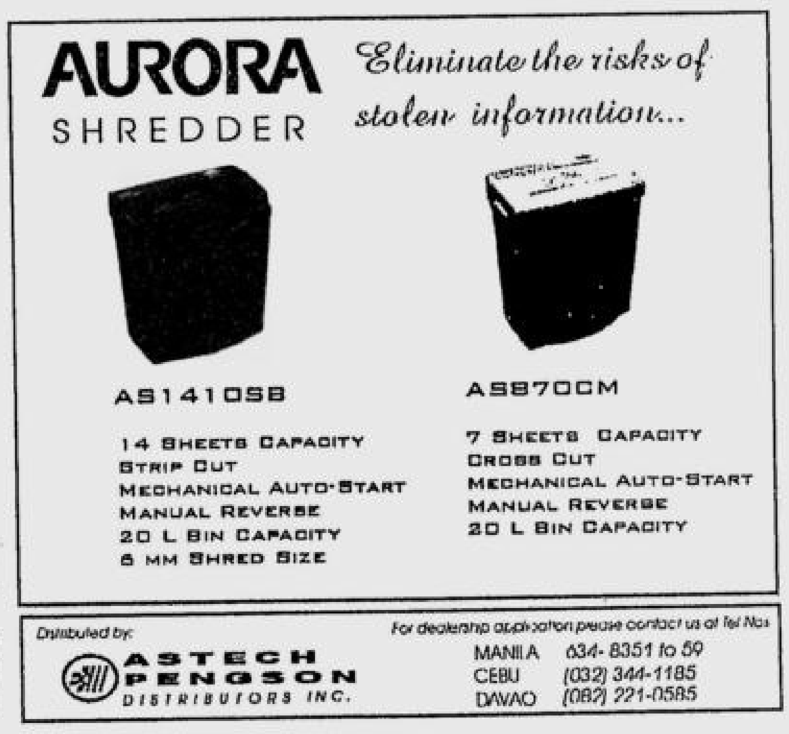

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# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

# Sharon no longer in danger

JERUSALEM—DOCTORS BRINGING ARIEL SHARON out of a medically induced coma declared Tuesday that the Israeli premier's life was no longer in danger and that there were increased signs of activity in his brain.

The 77-year-old Sharon, whose fate is crucial to Israel and the wider Middle East, remains in intensive care after suffering a massive brain hemorrhage last week, but medics indicated his condition was no longer life-threatening.

**SHARON**

"The prime minister's condition is serious but there is no immediate danger to the prime minister's life," Sharon's chief anesthetist Yoram Weiss told reporters at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital.

"In recent days there has been a significant change in the prime minister's condition but we still have a long way to go and we all have to be patient.

"Since yesterday the prime minister has been breathing spontaneously. He is on a respirator but he is the one who is operating the respirator," he said.

"We are gradually reducing the level of drugs being given and monitoring the various parameters including intra-cranial pressure to prevent any further damage being done." Israelis and world leaders have braced themselves for the end of the Sharon era, fearing his demise would spark new turmoil in a region struggling to find the path to peace after decades of conflict.

The hospital's director, Shlomo Mor Yosef, told the news conference that Sharon had moved his left hand for the first time and had managed to move his right arm more than in an initial stimulus test on Monday.

"These are neurological changes that show a slight progress in the brain function of the prime minister," he said.

Medics have said only the right-hand side of Sharon's brain, which controls the left side of his body, was affected in the brain hemorrhage and the latest movement may indicate he has retained more brain function than first thought.

For days doctors have doubted Sharon can again lead the country, leaving Israel staring into a political void just over two months before a general election, which the prime minister's new Kadima party had been tipped to win.

Weiss was reluctant, however, to be drawn on Sharon's long-term prospects or speculate whether his five-year premiership had effectively ended with his dramatic collapse and brain hemorrhage.

"I believe that all of us need to be patient," said the anesthetist, saying doctors had not yet expressed either optimism or pessimism.

"We are not prophets." In the week since Sharon collapsed, Israelis have been glued to television and radio bulletins for hourly news of his health.

A decision on whether Sharon's condition permanently incapacitates him as premier will be made by Israel's attorney general Menachem Mazuz only after doctors have determined the full damage to his brain.

Reports said Mozart, one of Sharon's favorite composers, was being played and his sense of smell stimulated with slow roasted meat, although there has been no sign that the prime minister has heard the music or sniffed the food.

With the premier in intensive care, his stand-in Ehud Olmert has pledged business as usual, as public figures urge a time of national unity and an end to political bickering until Israel rides out the crisis.

An opinion poll released Tuesday found 50 percent of respondents had confidence in the acting premier and projected that Kadima would win a whopping 45 of the 120 seats in parliament under his leadership, the party's highest rating since its foundation in November. *AFP*

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**occasion that has led to deadly stampedes in the past.**

# Iran's resumption
# research outrages

VIENNA—IRAN TRIGGERED A FURIOUS reaction from the West on Tuesday by announcing it had resumed sensitive nuclear research work after a two-year suspension, heightening the risk that it could be hauled before the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

Tehran defied international calls to maintain the suspension as it announced that it removed seals of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from its Natanz research facility in central Iran.

IAEA director Mohamed ElBaradei confirmed the move and said that seals at two "related storage and testing locations" were due to be removed by Wednesday.

The UN nuclear watchdog's chief also confirmed that Iran planned to use centrifuges to enrich uranium "on a small scale."

In Tehran, Mohammad Saidi, the deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency, announced that "as of today these centers resume their activities."

"The research will be carried out in all the centers that we told the IAEA about, and we will restart our work," Saidi said.

Western nations fear that Iran will use its civilian nuclear program to build an atomic bomb, a charge that Tehran vehemently denies.

Angry over Iran's resumption of sensitive nuclear activities, the United States and European Union warned that the Islamic republic could be referred to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

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## WORLDBRIEFS

### Turkey: Bird flu outbreak under c

ANKARA—TURKEY sought Tuesday to reassure its wary neig
bird flu outbreak under control as officials announced a new h
out a mass slaughter of poultry to limit the spread of the virus
concern among Turkey's neighbors that the contamination m
tory, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan insisted th
about. "The situation is fully under control. We will continue t
with utmost care," Erdogan told a joint news conference with
Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

### 20 error suspects arrested in Spa

MADRID Spanish police arrested 20 people, mostly Moroc
rorism and violence in Iraq in raids across Spain Tuesday, Int
Alonso said. Alonso said there were "strong indications" seve
had links to a commando group which killed 28 people, inclu
an attack on an Italian base in Iraq in November 2003. He said
Moroccan nationals, three were Spaniards, one was Turkish a

### US holds new Guantanamo trials

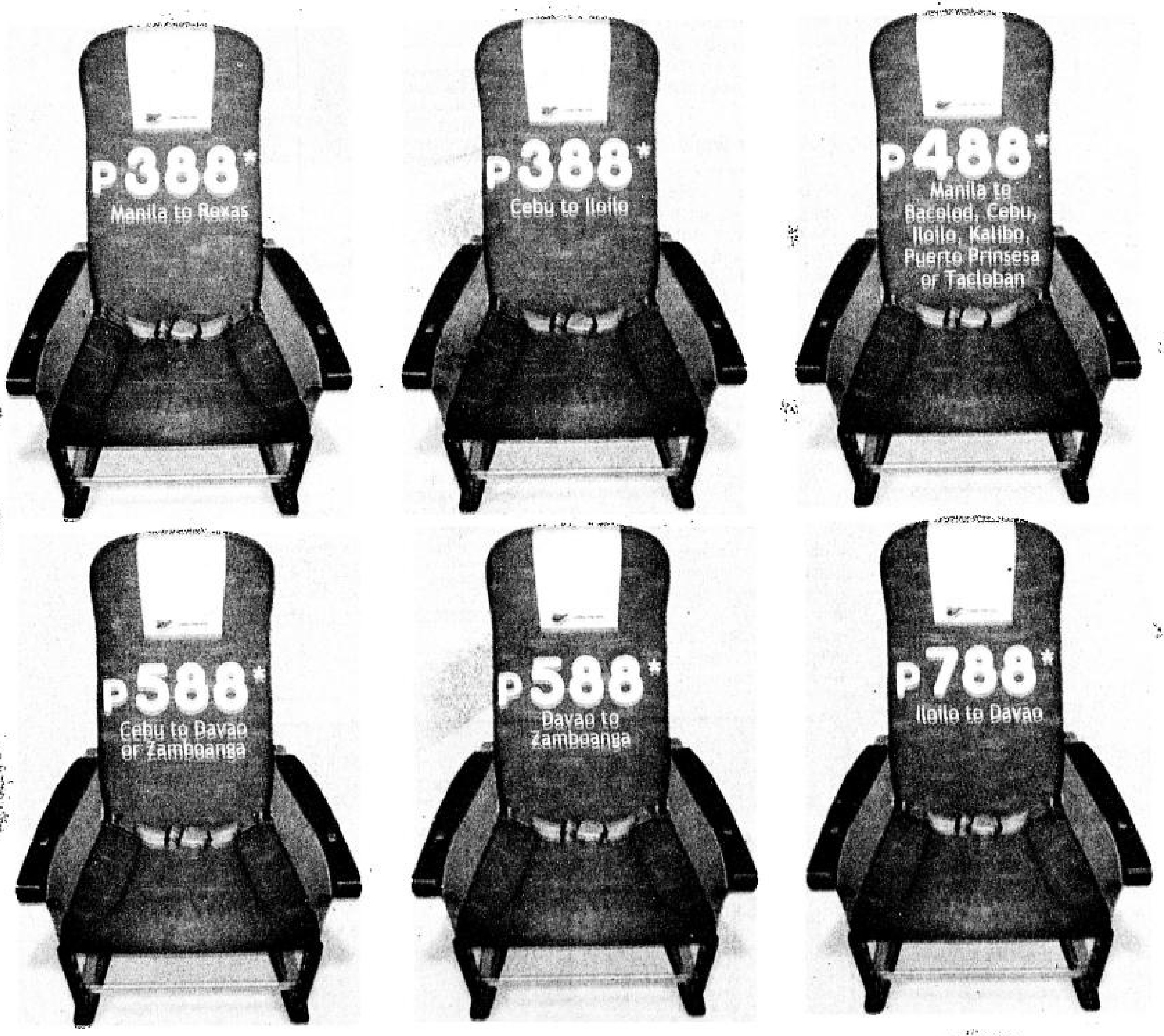
GUANTANAMO BAY US NAVAL BASE, Cuba—The United Stat
new military trials of "war on terror" detainees at the Guantan
new criticism of the camp and its courts. Accused al-Qaida p
Ahmad al-Bahlul will be the first of two defendants to face he
followed mar Khadr, a Canadian who was 15 when he wa
of a US n Afghanistan. US authorities continue to de
of detain ithout charge at the camp as part of the "war on
Sept 11 1 attacks.

### Science to retract another stem c

WASHINGTON—US research journal Science said Tuesday it
ticle by disgraced South Korean stem cell scientist Hwang Wo
criminal charges over fraudulent research. Science's editor D
a video statement that such faked research was disturbing, bu
view policies, was hard to expose and probably could never b
would retract an article by Hwang from 2004 in which he clai
cells from a human embryo.

### Sunnis protest raid on mosque

BAGHDAD—Angry Sunni Arabs protested Tuesday at a raid o
and Iraqi soldiers looking for a kidnapped US woman reporte
ries of abductions of Westerners in Iraq. Waving banners and
about 700 people rallied in the gardens of the Umm al-Qura m
capital to denounce the Saturday night raid. "The attack on th
an attack on Muslims and Islam," read one of the banners at t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ca Jan. 10, Tuesday, the climax of the annual hajj pilgrimage and an

REUTERS

# Ukraine parliament sacks gov't

KIEV—UKRAINE'S PARLIAMENT voted Tuesday to sack the government over a controversial deal to resolve the country's energy crisis following a damaging dispute with Russia that sent a shudder through energy-reliant Europe.

Lawmakers passed a resolution of no confidence in the government of Prime Minister Yury Yekhanurov with 250 votes in favor, well over the 226 needed for it to pass.

"We should defend the interests of Ukraine. We should defend the Ukrainian people," said Nestor Shufrich, one of the deputies opposed to last week's deal ending a "gas war" with Russian energy giant Gazprom.

While the resolution takes immediate effect, the lawmakers also ordered that ministers stay on in a caretaker capacity until a new government can be formed.

Analysts were doubtful that would happen before parliamentary elections that are scheduled for March 26.

But the vote is a blow to the leadership of President Viktor Yushchenko.

The cabinet had been expected to weather a torrent of criticism of last week's gas deal, which resolved a crisis that briefly disrupted supplies to several European countries for which Ukraine is the main transit route.

In the event, the no-confidence resolution drew support from diverse political groups.

Votes in favor came from blocs led both by Yulia Tymoshenko—a key figure who stood side-by-side with Yushchenko in the 2004 "orange revolution"—and from Viktor Yanukovich, whose pro-Moscow leadership the revolution was aimed at.

Arriving on a visit to the Kazakh capital Astana, Yushchenko slammed the move and said he would challenge it before the Constitutional Court.

"Time will show that this decision is not constitutional," said Yushchenko, who was scheduled to attend the inauguration Wednesday of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Yushchenko has been struggling to live up to the hopes raised by the 2004 "orange" protests at which he promised a radical shift away from Moscow and towards the West.

His team last year made heavy work of promised liberalization, while Yushchenko also fell out with the charismatic Tymoshenko, whom he sacked as prime minister in September.

His goals of hoped-for European Union and NATO membership will hang in the balance at the March 26 polls, analysts say.

At Tuesday's session, Yekhanurov defended the deal with Russia on gas prices, telling parliament that it served Ukraine's interests and promising that consumers would not face price hikes any time soon. **AFP**

# South Asia cold wave death toll rises to 256

LUCKNOW, INDIA—THE DEATH toll in a cold wave sweeping across parts of South Asia rose to 256 on Wednesday after more than two dozen people died overnight, though temperatures began to ease upward, officials and media said.

Across a wide swath of South Asia stretching from Pakistan in west across northern India and to Bangladesh in the east, millions of poor huddled around fires to ward off the cold.

In the worst hit part of India, the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, at least 16 people died overnight, said Surendra Srivastava, a police spokesperson in Lucknow, the state capital. Temperatures fell to nearly freezing (0ºCelsius) in some parts of northern India, but were a few degrees warmer in cities like New Delhi, where overnight temperatures had dipped to near freezing in the last few days.

Daytime winter temperatures in northern India are ordinarily around 15 degrees Celsius, with the weather a few degrees cooler at night. A power outage in some parts of Uttar Pradesh prompted angry nighttime protests by residents who set fire to a utility station in the city of Gorakhpur and blocked traffic in the town of Barabanki, said home department spokesperson Amrish Mehrotra.

In Bangladesh, the victims suffered fevers, pneumonia or were exposed to chilly weather as temperatures in the northern districts of Pabna and Ishwardi fell to 8ºCelsius, Dhaka's private NTV television station reported. **AP**

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# OPINION

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## Recycled trick

**EDITORIAL**

PRESS SECRETARY IGNACIO BUNYE SAYS THE "Hello, Garci" controversy has become a "heavily recycled issue" which should now be dropped so that the nation can move forward. He says opposition leaders have "thrown everything they could" last year when they tried to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo and the worst is now over for the administration. "Our detractors would gain nothing for the national interest by kicking this dead horse," he said Monday. "I would appeal to them to consider whether their actions would benefit the people or not."

If anything is being recycled here, it is the old administration trick of blaming the opposition and its other critics for all the country's political troubles. From the time the existence of the "Hello, Garci" tape was revealed, Malacañang has stuck to the position that the issue of election fraud is nothing but a component of an elaborate plot to drive President Arroyo out of office.

But the President herself has admitted that she had phoned an election official because she was "anxious to protect my votes." However, she has never identified who that election official was, although the whole world is convinced it was then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. Neither has she or any administration official bothered to explain exactly how Garcillano was supposed to protect her votes, although everyone who has listened to the tapes knows: through the manipulation of election returns, bribery of election officials, the use of sympathetic military officers, kidnapping and other low-down tricks.

The extent of such criminal activities and who were behind them would have been known, and the central question of whether or not Ms Arroyo won fair and square would have been answered had there been a thorough investigation of the case. But the administration made sure that any attempt to get to the bottom of the case would get nowhere, first by sending Garcillano into hiding and then using its numerical superiority to quash an impeachment complaint in the House of Representatives.

No investigation. No answers. No closure. The cycle was never completed, so how can the issue be recycled? With so many questions left hanging, is it any wonder that the opposition is picking them up again after the brief distraction of the holiday season?

In the Senate, the committee on national defense will resume its investigation of the "Hello, Garci" scandal on Jan. 19, with Sen. Rodolfo Biazon presenting five new witnesses. These witnesses would reveal details about the wiretapping activities during the 2004 elections and their testimony would support allegations that massive fraud was committed during the electoral exercise to favor Ms Arroyo, Biazon promised.

In the House, opposition congressmen are already girding for another bruising battle, six months before they can even file another impeachment complaint against the President. Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, the minority leader, said they are ready with documentary and testimonial evidence to support a new impeachment motion.

Even some of Ms Arroyo's political allies have become uneasy about the failure to bring closure to the case. Former President Fidel Ramos, for one, has again called publicly for Ms Arroyo to step down by the middle of 2007, cutting her term by half.

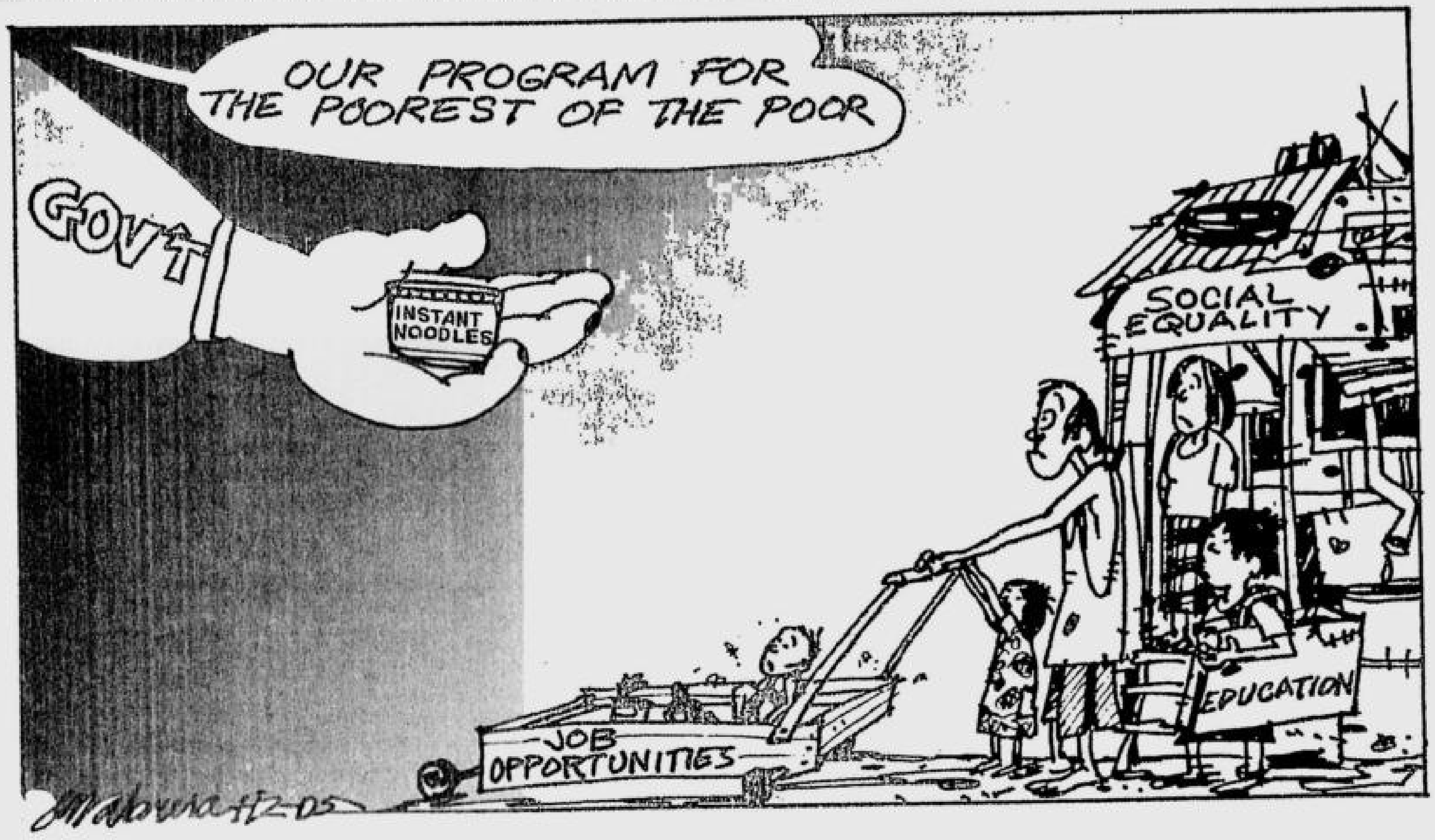
Thus, while the administration anticipates an economic takeoff spurred by a stronger peso and an improved fiscal outlook, that could very well be aborted by further political turbulence ahead. When that happens, Ms Arroyo and her allies should stop blaming the opposition and her critics again. Everyone knows the root cause of political instability, and that is the question of legitimacy of her presidency.

## Bush's fall

**FOREIGN COMMENT**

A YEAR AGO GEORGE W. BUSH TOWERED OVER THE US POLItical scene, the clear victor of a hard-fought presidential election... Twelve months later, he is widely branded a lame-duck president, reduced from grand strategy to crisis management abroad and unable to pass big domestic reforms or set the political agenda at home.

In retrospect, the President Bush of January 2005 was not as invincible as he appeared then, and the President Bush of January 2006 is not as helpless as he looks. It is still possible for him to bounce back. Events could simply turn in his favor—above all in Iraq, the defining issue of his presidency. Yet Mr. Bush should not bank on this. He must revitalize his administration with new blood and a new style of government: less partisan, more realistic; less insistent on executive prerogative, more willing to engage respectfully with critics. *Financial Times (London)*



## Intimations of mortality

**VIEWPOINT**

*Juan L. Mercado*

THE THREADBARE NATURE OF NEW YEAR politics is glimpsed in deposed Joseph Estrada's demand that he preside over the Council of State meeting—and Malacañang's riposte: Erap "disinvited" himself.

Presidents have treated the Council of State with benign neglect. Designed to bring insights and advice for critical issues from leaders of all political persuasions, the body mouldered over the years.

So, where is President Macapagal-Arroyo's enthusiasm for a Council of State meeting surging from? Among others, she invited former Presidents Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and, originally, Estrada.

From "issues of constitutional change and political reform," Palace spokespersons claim. Or does it come from "intimations of mortality"?

"The political debate of 2006 is already moving toward the search of a post-Arroyo transition," INQUIRER's Amando Doronila perceptively points out. "The movement to cut short her term has regained impetus." Ritualistic conferences will not bottle up calls for new beginnings after Ms Arroyo.

Among boozing midnight Cabinet cronies, Estrada deluded himself that his ride was for keeps. He wilts in the slammer today. President Arroyo hasn't been immune from such delusion: she'll stay forever—all right, until her term peters out in 2010.

But talk about life after her is no longer whispered. It's increasingly discussed in the open. And for good reason. Her capacity to govern is strained in a world where more have less.

Filipinos now total over 85 million. We will crest 90 million by the time a new constitution is ratified, if ever. And that blur that streaked by is China. Her per capita income now exceeds ours. Thailand and Korea zipped by earlier. And those footfalls behind are the Vietnamese's, they're catching up fast.

Presidents are made of common clay, too. Most are tantalized by the possibilities of prolonged tenure. Few resist the temptation. Corazon Aquino did. She stepped down, after her term, without whimpering.

Dictators like Marcos, Suharto, Mobuto and Zimbabwe's Mugabe try clinging to power for life. Nicaragua's Anastacio Somoza simply rigged the polls.

Others seek extensions by constitutional tinkering. Citizen resistance stopped Fidel Ramos dead in his tracks from scrapping the prohibition against presidential reelection, with his subsidized Pirma-front..

Those who can't be king, moonlight as kingmaker. Erap flubbed that role for the late Fernando Poe Jr. For his part, Ramos demands that the President quit before the end of June 2007. She could decide then whether to be reincarnated in a parliament, he adds.

Such parliament exists, so far, only in the gleam of Ramos' eyes and those of his soulmates. Neither Constituent Assembly nor Constitutional Convention has been called. No draft has been filed, discussed, approved, much less ratified.

A skeptical people won't docilely jump through the parliamentary hoop at Ramos' bidding. In fact, many are turned off by controversial revisions—from the no-election provision to the skewering of the press freedom article.

But that phantom parliament didn't stop Ramos from badgering Vice President Noli de Castro: trim your constitutional term in exchange for "Cabinet post plus a seat" in a ghost parliament. Negotiating with banshee chips is the name of this game.

To jumpstart a stagnant government, other proposals are bandied about. Filipino communists, led by "Ka Roger," propose more attacks on cell sites and "revolutionary taxes." Abandoned by China, none of the world's 200-plus governments recognize them.

"The only way forward..., whether to replace a discredited incumbent, or to institute structural reforms, is within the parameters of the Constitution," INQUIRER columnist Manuel Quezon warns. "There is no substitute for following the difficult, because the people signed on to strict, contractual obligations when they ratified the 1987 Charter."

The quick fix mentality is apparent in the proposal for a troika of transitional leadership, lofted at a secret meeting: Aquino, Ramos and Estrada would muscle aside President Arroyo.

Transition to where? No explanation came from the meeting participants: none from Ramos himself; none from Sen. Franklin Drilon, who arm-twisted Ms Arroyo and De Castro to quit, so he'd coast into Malacañang as *numero tres* in the charter pecking order; and none from *trapo* par excellence, ex-Sen. Tito Sotto.

Recycled faces do not guarantee radical change. Their flaws constitute one of President Arroyo's few remaining strengths. "It's terrible to contemplate how few politicians are hanged," G.K. Chesterton once complained.

Favor-seekers, meanwhile, stream to Malacañang to pledge fealty. Gloucester tried to kiss King Lear's hand. "Let me wipe it first," Lear remonstrates. "It smells of mortality."

Underneath all the bustle, a universal truth is at work: All things pass—and we along with them. Kings and kingmakers are here today. Tomorrow, they are gone. All should sense these "intimations of mortality."

What time remains must be applied to things that ultimately matter: reducing hunger's toll; curbing obscenely high infant and maternal death rates; providing basics like clean water, affordable medicine, primary schooling, etc.

Diplomats call those "Millennium Development Goals." Others say they're the essentials of a humane society. "Teach me to number my days aright that I may know how short life is," the ancient writers tell us.

* * *

*E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph*

## Stop the bus, I'm getting off

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

WITH THE DAWNING OF THE NEW YEAR, I'VE read comments from readers saying they're fed up with politics, it's time we moved on. I don't know how much of it is genuine sentiment and how much is Pagcor-driven. The surveys at least say the current government's credibility has hit rock bottom—most Filipinos believe it sucks even if most of them as well don't quite know what to do with it. But assuming the people who say they're fed up with "negative-thinking, let's move on" are real and their aggravation heartfelt, I must ask: Move on to where? None of the writers of these missives exactly bothers to indicate this. They merely assume that once everybody stops protesting/objecting/criticizing, things will be better.

Well, for their benefit, I'll spell out exactly where we'll be moving on to.

One, we will be moving on to Charter change. It is a very political exercise that says the problem of the country is not that a small group of people can actually hijack the country by stealing the vote, silencing witnesses and imposing their will on everything, but that we have an unresponsive form of government. It is a very political exercise that grants that GMA is the legitimate ruler of this country notwithstanding Garci, and that being so, she can go on to rule the country indefinitely. That is so because after finishing her term in 2010, she can go on to run as prime minister, and by dint of stealing the votes—she's perceived to have done it before and gotten away with it, what's to prevent her from doing it again?—rule after that. After she serves her time as prime minister, she can always get Jose Abueva et al. to do another Charter change and bring back the presidential system, and run again. They did it before when there was no clamor for Charter change, what's to prevent them from doing it again when they've gotten used to never-ending power along with never-ending divisiveness?

Two, we will be moving on to a vote-for-hire Congress ruled by Jose de Venecia and Prospero Pichay, who will continue to fight acrimoniously for the role of top dog. If they are lucky, they will get to rule a parliament, while still fighting acrimoniously for the role of top dog, to the delight of the one person who has superseded them in "*trapo*-hood," the erstwhile president now prime minister, GMA. Additionally, you will have an executive run by shady characters like Ronnie Puno and the two Gonzales(z)es, and a judiciary run by the Firm, also called Villaraza and Associates. They've pretty much stifled all opposition, with no small help from a public fed up with politics and calling for moving on. They will definitely move on—and seize anything left seizable.

Three, we will be moving on to Jose Pidal being first in line to seize anything left to be seized. Like his wife, he has managed to dodge justice, escaping with his loot to San Francisco, enjoying Pacquiao's fights in the luxury of rooms provided high rollers by the gangsters of Las Vegas. Armed with the vision that we are world-class and second to none, he and his wife will turn this country from the second most corrupt country in Asia to the first. By rivaling Marcos' scale of pillage, or going past it, husband and wife will succeed in doing two things. One, raise taxes on the ground that government is bankrupt and they would like to avert a financial crisis, chiefly of their own doing. And two, drive more Filipinos abroad, including teachers quite apart from doctors-turned-nurses, who will send more remittances home to tide their families over, which will strengthen the peso, thereby allowing Malacañang to claim credit for sound economic management.

They will have no problems doing this, the public being fed up with politics and demanding we come together, rally behind this, and move on.

Four, we will be moving on to a politics where lying, cheating and stealing are par for the course—no, given pride of place and called "pragmatism" or "realpolitik." GMA will swear on Bonifacio's grave she will not run for prime minister because to do so would be to assure more never-ending divisiveness, but run anyway. Either of the two Gonzales(z)es will become Comelec chief—or probably even Virgilio Garcillano himself on the ground that he was never prosecuted and convicted for cheating and lying with foul breath and that people are innocent until proven guilty. Various factions will decide whether we will have elections or not, an academic argument since votes are not counted anyway in elections. The Comelec itself will use another P3 billion of taxpayers' money, pick out the wrong bidder and find the computerization idea flawed at the last minute and go back to the ballot box which makes cheating easier. There is no law penalizing lying, cheating and stealing so everyone will lie, cheat and steal. There is no public opinion heaping opprobrium on lying, cheating and stealing, so everyone will lie, cheat and steal.

In the provinces, journalists who continue to criticize/protest/object will disappear from the face of the earth. Today, they are being routinely killed or driven away from home and hearth. In the capital, journalists who continue to criticize/protest/object will be marginalized, called negative-minded, outsiders, *walang pakikisama*, and hounded to cynicism and despair, if not sent packing, along with caregivers and teachers, to other shores.

We will be moving on to a nation that is no longer a nation, to a future without a future, to a life that is the next best thing to death. While government continues to promise the moon and give craters, and small minds with teeny-weeny voices continue to whimper, "We're fed up with politics, let's move on."

Let's move on? Stop the bus, I'm getting off.

# GMA foes should back transitory provisions

## POLITICAL TIDBITS

*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

THE PALACE REACTION TO THE SECOND "deadline" imposed by former President Fidel Ramos on President Macapagal-Arroyo—for her to step aside by June 30—was entirely predictable: it's "premature." As Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye explained, GMA is willing to abide by whatever Congress, acting as a constituent assembly, would adopt in a new constitution which will be submitted to the people for ratification in a plebiscite. This may include cutting her term by three years. But GMA wants the term reduction to be the product of the deliberation of Congress and the final decision of the sovereign people, in a process defined by the Constitution.

* * *

**In so doing, GMA has thrown her fate completely to Congress and the people. Which means that, as Vice President Noli de Castro enunciated after a meeting with FVR over the holidays, she also has an extreme dislike for deadlines. De Castro pointedly compared the FVR "deadline" with a similar deadline imposed on him by the Black and White Movement, which he rejected. If I were in their shoes, I would also have reacted the same way, for by what authority are they imposing a deadline?**

**FVR's brinkmanship obviously stems from his thinking that he can influence many other erstwhile GMA supporters to join him in making good that deadline. But at this point, this is doubtful. Should he decide to withdraw support from GMA, however, it could also put him at cross-purposes with the second member of the Lakas troika, Speaker Jose de Venecia, whose alliance with GMA appears to be solid at this point.**

* * *

One reason GMA may be playing hard ball about resignation may be the fact that the recent examination and recount of ballots from the province of Cebu by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) have not yielded glaring discrepancies between her votes and those of De Castro's, and their opponents, Fernando Poe Jr. and Loren Legarda. GMA's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, is also De Castro's lawyer, while Legarda is represented in her election protest by Sixto Brillantes, who was also FPJ's lawyer. Macalintal said that the PET has already finished revising all the 771 precincts of Mandaue City and has started the revision of ballots of the 692 precincts of Lapu Lapu City. But so far, he said, no discrepancies have turned up in the VP race, and it's logical to assume the same conclusion insofar as the votes for president are concerned, since the same ballots and returns were used, counted and canvassed. Macalintal pointed out that official records show that in the entire Cebu province, Ms Arroyo garnered a margin of 842,531 over FPJ, and in Cebu City her margin was 162,469, for a total vote lead of 1,005,000. Thus, said GMA's lawyer, to nullify her election, the opposition has to invalidate her lead of more than a million in these places in Cebu. But the results are solid for GMA, he says.

* * *

**A litmus test for FVR could be the national directorate meeting of the ruling Lakas party this Saturday, where he could have a good sampling of how many would support his deadline. The majority in this group are elected local officials, from members of the House down to the municipal officials, who are thinking of their reelection in 2007. Understandably, many of them are not only pushing for Charter change but also for the cancellation of the 2007 elections. But whether "No-El" materializes or not by that time, many local officials would doubtless consider the support of the incumbent President more crucial to their political fate than that of someone who had been there before.**

* * *

Opposition leaders were quoted as saying they would push for Charter change if GMA steps down. In other words, it's a quid pro quo. Their posture only shows that they can only think of themselves and care little for the merits or lack of them of the proposed new parliamentary system. In effect they're holding the country hostage to the course of action GMA would take, and this smacks of political blackmail. What they failed to do in the streets over the many months of rallies or in Congress during the impeachment process which they bungled, they now hope to do through cheap bargaining.

* * *

**By imposing a "deadline" on the President, FVR sadly seems to be on the same footing as the opposition, which is holding the Charter issue hostage. Both their acts are causing a lot of instability, which is not helping the country. Instead of resorting to such destabilizing actions, what those who want GMA out of power ought to do is campaign hard among the members of Congress to approve a new constitution and the transitory provisions cutting short the tenure of incumbent officials, and then campaign for a yes vote in the plebiscite. But let's not put a constitutional gun to GMA's head by imposing "deadlines" or meaningless quid pro quos.**

* * *

Last Tuesday, I wrote about the recent launch of the book, "How 2 Come to the UK—To Live Work Study or Visit," by registered London-based immigration advisers Charles Kelly and Cynthia Alcantara-Barker (a native of San Pablo, Laguna, who has lived in the United Kingdom for 17 years). The authors have helped thousands of people, including Filipinos, come to the UK the "legit way," under UK laws, thereby sparing them thousands of pounds in debt and years of wasted effort. Their book contains a wealth of information on how to apply for a UK work permit and visa, but also on the lucrative fields open to foreign workers there, how to access "one million jobs," study courses and student grants and scholarships. The book is available at Fully Booked, R3 Level, The Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center in Makati City.

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# Female feticide

## HUMAN FACE

*Ma. Ceres P. Doyo*

HOW WOULD THOSE WHO CHAMPION WOMEN'S rights (to choose what they want to do with their bodies and the babies in their wombs) handle this mutilation of future women? If there is an issue that makes the pro-choice advocacy in the women's rights movement stand on its head this is it.

I am not twitting, I am saying that this issue is important for the pro-choice advocates to address.

In the Reuters news two days ago was the recent research on fertility figures showing that about 10 million female fetuses may have been deliberately aborted in India over the past 20 years. (This story was carried by the INQUIRER.)

This practice was not discovered just yesterday. This has been going on for some time since the technology for sex determination (amniocentesis, ultrasound, etc.) became available. But when a science research team gets down to the bottom of it, comes up with numbers, and publishes the findings in the prestigious The Lancet medical journal, the world takes notice.

This massive selective abortion of female fetuses, the report said, must be the most plausible explanation for the skewed male to female ratio. Dr. Prabhat Jha, of the University of Toronto, who headed the research, said that prenatal sex determination and selective abortion account for half a million missing girls yearly. Multiply that by 20 years and you have 10 million missing girls. The Indian Medical Association has a more shocking estimate—five million female fetuses are killed in India each year.

A lot has been written about this criminal practice of killing female fetuses in India where sons are deemed more precious than daughters, where tradition that has perpetuated this preference dies hard.

There is a big uproar over this among the Indians themselves. Sure, the women's movement is alive and well in India. NGOs working for the welfare of women thrive there, and yet they could only do so much in preventing the killing of female fetuses.

As I said, this issue surely makes the pro-choice in the women's rights movement stand on its head. One cannot defend the rights of female fetuses and not defend the rights of any fetus. One cannot raise an outcry over the killing of these supposedly unwanted female fetuses and not raise an outcry over the killing of fetuses in general, they be female or male.

What makes for a less-preferred or an unwanted fetus? It's being female (as in the case of India or China)? The preference of the fetus' mother as dictated by culture? The circumstances and context of its conception? (Rape, poverty, too many children already.)

I bring up this scenario because in India, where abortion is legal, abortion becomes illegal if it is sex-determined, meaning, abortion is based on the fetus' sex. But it is legal if the reason is not the baby's sex but some other.

India's Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique Act of 1994 criminalizes sex determination tests with the motive of female feticide. Doctors in India are prohibited from disclosing to their patients, who undergo ultrasound procedure (for whatever reason), what their babies' sex is. But everybody knows that speech or the written word is not the only means of communicating.

The Indian government even launched a series of ads against the rampant killing of unborn girls. This practice is rooted in the cultural preference for sons and the exorbitant dowry demands on the families of brides.

In India there is this saying "Raising a girl is like watering the neighbor's garden," Jeremy Copeland of CBC News wrote. "In a country where sons have far more status than daughters, Susheela did what many Indian women are too afraid to do: she gave birth to a baby girl. Twelve weeks into her pregnancy, she went for an ultrasound test and the doctor accepted a bribe to reveal the sex of her fetus. When he announced Susheela was carrying a girl, her husband and mother-in-law tried to force her to have an abortion.

"'They didn't let me eat food. There were times when I went hungry for as many as two to three days,' Susheela says. 'They used to beat me. On two or three occasions, my husband kicked me very hard in the stomach.'

"There are also religious reasons parents want a son. More than 800 million Indians are Hindu and their faith says only male children can perform the last rites for their parents."

The selective abortions and the skewed male to female ratio have alarmed Indian society. Religious groups recently held a conference with the theme "India's missing daughters: Faith for Action Against Sex Selection."

A 2001 census showed that in four states, the ratio has dramatically declined to less than 800 girls for every 1,000 boys. The ratio is still highest in Christian communities.

The study published in The Lancet showed that fewer females are born as second and third children if the first child in a family is a girl, the Reuters report said. This could be interpreted as a-boy-or-nothing effort on the part of families. No to another girl; the second one has to be a boy. Where did those missing second or third daughters go?

When I first learned about female feticide and the declining ratio of girls to boys, what played in my mind was a scene from a futuristic fiction where the boys dramatically outnumbered the girls, say, 10 to one. And there was this surreal stampede and panic among scientists to correct the situation by whatever means, including multiple births and cloning. Men were marrying men, women chose only the best and the brightest of men, and the women who gave birth to daughters were to be envied.

Google for "female feticide" and you'll get plenty of eye-openers.

* * *

*Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph*

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# President for life

## THE LONG VIEW

*Manuel L. Quezon III*

WHEN THE POLITICAL CRISIS BEGAN LAST year, many people opposed to her were dismissive of my insistence that we had to assume that the President's only option was to become president for life. Not specifically in the Marcosian sense (since what has come before cannot be exactly duplicated), but simply out of the urge—basic to most leaders and instinctive in almost all Philippine presidents—that if fate and destiny should happen to decree it, a lifetime as chief executive is something not to turn down. In politics, of course, fate and destiny are synonymous with party machinery and executive patronage. If you have the machinery and the money, then you can decree a fate and a destiny favorable to you.

From the start of the President's troubles, her survival was clearly going to be—as the Duke of Wellington might have described it—a "close-run thing." Loyalty to the President was confused with loyalty to the country; and if the President's womanhood was a cause for *macho* opposition to her in certain quarters, it also provoked a certain kind of gallantry among originally disenchanted officials, who decided to stick it out with her. The legislature was methodically lobbied, as were other organizations—from the associations of local government executives to the Catholic and other religious hierarchies. The objective was to stop the drifting of members from the parties constituting the governing coalition to the ranks of the opposition: thus the Liberals were divided, but enough stuck by the President; the LDP quietly clung to her, as did the NPC. Protestants and Catholics were clearly divided, but enough leaders opted to sit on the fence, invoking political and moral prudence.

The members of the opposition forgot that the first responsibility of an opposition is not to indulge in intramurals but to unite, and to sort out its differences later after it has won. The President's key allies knew that the foremost activity of a beleaguered presidency is to keep opponents divided while giving in, temporarily at least, to the avarice of politicians, which is their primary motivation during times of crisis.

Over everything hovered the timely but time-bound support given by former President Fidel Ramos, who saw an opportunity to advance the constitutional prescriptions he and his followers gave out in the 1990s, never mind that these had been rejected by the people. (Have we forgotten the rally in Rizal Park, with Cory Aquino, Cardinal Sin, and Joseph Estrada linking arms versus Ramos?) The ghost of Ramos' grand plan keeps haunting the President's efforts.

I said at the time, and still say, that the President has no option but to hold on to the presidency until 2010, and perhaps, become prime minister beyond that. To assume otherwise is to succumb to false hopes that will be fatal to the efforts to oppose her. The renewed confidence in the Palace, which has firmly—though as courteously as it can—set aside its former policy of gamely going along with the Ramos plan, is the latest and most open manifestation of this political imperative.

When the President came out fighting in July, she dared the opposition to do its best: instead, the latter did its worst, and continues to do so. Estrada loyalists continue to argue on how best to glue together the shattered pieces of a deposed Humpty-Dumpty presidency; at the same time obsessed with the conduct of the May 2004 elections—an obsession that, though meritorious, has, however, kept them dwelling too much on something that happened prior to the President's present term. All the while, they have failed to focus enough on what I personally believe are the more damning issues of her accountability for: the cover-up that's taken place since June of last year, and the accompanying abuse of executive powers and prerogatives.

The factors for cobbling up a broader unity are actually there for everyone to see (and go beyond the President, whatever her ambitions): the present Comelec—more specifically, getting rid of it, an effort that should reunite our fragmented "civil society" (it is too much to expect elected officials, except the senators, to take up the call); the opposition to the manner in which the Ramos plan for constitutional change has been mutated (it will will not result in a genuine parliamentary government); and the serious consideration of federalism, or even reforms affecting political parties.

I have expressed my opinions regarding Charter change before. I will only add that it seems to me that if you want a parliamentary government, you cannot have federalism; and if you are a federalist you must seriously examine the retention of a nationally elected presidency with a bicameral legislature. The efforts of the President are gearing toward turning back the clock to the system advocated by provincial worthies in the Malolos Republic, without taking into consideration the desires of so many people for a more modern political system, regardless of what shape that will take.

Three things, I believe, are required of all those who are opposed to the President: an epidemic of sacrifice, in which the hurts of the past are buried together with the ambitions of those opposing her only because they want to replace her; a greater effort to discover the principles (if any) that can serve as a basis for unity instead of reasons for disagreement; and a more consistent, open-minded engagement of the electorate outside Metro Manila. We must realize: whether it takes a day or a decade, the Arroyo presidency must one day come to an end, and what will replace it? If you are a genuine believer in federalism or parliamentary system (run by sincere, disciplined parties), has the government offered you prospects for achieving either?

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# 'Yayo'

## YOUNG BLOOD

*Joanna Ruth Utzurrum*

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.*

AS I WRITE THIS, I SHOULD BE FACING MY BOOKS AND trying to summarize cases. But to me, writing has always been a form of therapy, from which I usually derive catharsis. Consequently, I must write my thoughts down in order for me to be able to proceed with the rest of the semester.

I met and befriended Yayo last summer, when I was chosen to represent my school in the Alternative Law Groups (ALG)-Central Visayas Cluster's Summer Internship Program. He was a former summer intern turned facilitator. At 23, he became my boyfriend. Since I was 28, I was surprised I bridged the age gap although I had a rule that my boyfriend should be "plus or minus 5 years" of my age. But then he makes up for his years with what he has in wisdom and street-wise intelligence. Now I understand why Demi Moore had no hesitation about marrying Ashton Kutcher.

I had thought little of Yayo in a romantic light up to our internship evaluation at Boracay last June. We interns had the impression that he liked someone else. I figured it was his task as a facilitator to routinely check up on the interns such as myself.

He started to win me over by fussing over me like a nanny (hence, *yayo*) when I caught the flu on our trip back to Cebu from Boracay. Then came a barrage of snail mail. In this age of technology on which I am over-reliant, it was a sweet, old-fashioned novelty. But he learned to adjust to the technology, for my sake.

Technology helped us become better friends. The rare few who were aware of this began to wonder what was wrong with me. Why didn't I snag and chain this "amazing" guy? they asked.

I was hesitant for many reasons. For one thing, I had the impression that he was using his gift of gab as a classroom diversionary tactic; he claimed to have gotten away with passing grades without working hard. That did not sit well with me, who slaves away till dawn making computerized case summaries and notes.

I was also greatly bothered by the distance between us. I blame all of my close male pals for this. Before Yayo entered my life, I had had no boyfriend at the ripe old age of 28. Yet I believed I was wise in the ways of love. I was the one my male buddies always confided in and relied upon for advice, regarding their romantic indiscretions and infidelities, especially where long-distance relationships were concerned. For a large part of my adult life, I had some very good training, being super-close to a certified babe-magnet who was infamous for his mastery of flirting and smooth talk. At my age, I knew most, if not all, the tricks guys pull on gullible women.

My views started to change when I received a humbling e-mail from an old college buddy who is most like me in terms of personality and interests. Her e-mail convincingly rebutted all the superficial arguments I had against Yayo.

In due time, I succumbed to Yayo's wit and charm. At least, I was convinced he was not just lusting after my frontal assets. I was a person, not merely an object. And in fairness to him, I felt so much loved.

What happened since then? I guess the distance, my anxieties and knowledge of my male pals' romantic follies made me insecure and selfish. And they took a toll on my relationship with Yayo.

I understand Yayo thoroughly. I was in his shoes once, though of course there was no relationship to speak of then. If there was, it was all in my head.

Cheesy as it sounds, there comes a point in your life when, even if you still love someone so much, you have to let that person go. I find it so ironic how the tables have turned without creeping into my awareness: Once, I was the person doing more of the unconditional giving and loving, who felt hurt and used and unappreciated.

The difference between Yayo and myself, as he sees it, is that he loves me as me, while I love him only because he loves me. I am terribly sorry he feels that way, because it is probably too late to make him believe that he was the James Yap to my Kris Aquino. What an analogy, huh? But you get the point: Albeit much younger than I, he handled me maturely. He never rose to my insecurity baiting. I am admittedly not an easy person to love, what with my perfectionist streak and accomplishments which leave some males either tongue-tied with inadequacy or stupefied with respect.

I did try my best to make him feel loved equally. But he is right: our relationship was all about me—my wants, my needs, my whims—selfish, insensitive clod that I am. No wonder he was always waiting for the day when I would call it quits because my insecurities would finally control me.

And they did, in the same way his insecurities overcame him. He began dating other girls, apparently so that he would not be hurt and left empty when I finally left him at some point. My highly reliable gut instincts kicked in, making me argumentative. I finally asked to be spared the pain of knowing that I was just one among many. In legalese where both parties have some fault on a certain matter, we were in *pari delicto*.

I wish I still had the time and luxury to rewrite the ending of this story. But I don't. It hurts, especially since I am largely to blame. You may argue that three months of a relationship spent apart is not enough to be called real, substantial love, but with the way Yayo handled matters I can say without hesitation that it was.

Still, I thank God for being so good and giving me my first real love with Yayo's good soul and sincere heart. And that our breakup was an amicable one. I will be special, as he will always be special.

Now that I have gotten over my guilt and regret, I can return to my books. I hope he gets to read this. And read it with a light heart. He deserves much more than I was ever able to give him. My life was enriched by this experience: a lesson primarily about unconditional loving and giving. Unlike a previous chapter in my life, this one did not leave me emotionally scarred to the point where it would take me at least two or three years to open up my heart again. I have experienced real love, and I will embrace both the joy and the pain the next time I am blessed with another one.

*Joanna Ruth Utzurrum, 29, is a junior at the Silliman University College of Law.*

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*Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.*

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# Panganiban a 'natural justice'

THE INQUIRER, DESCRIBED JUStice Artemio V. Panganiban as one "who came from humble origins, supported his studies in elementary and high school by selling newspapers and cigarettes and by shining shoes; and in college, by selling textbooks to his classmates and bibles to professors. And despite juggling work and academics, he was an honor student from elementary to college. He got a law degree from the Far Eastern University, graduating cum laude in 1960; and placed sixth in the 1960 bar exams.

While associate justice of the Supreme Court, he authored 10 books since 1995, writing one book a year as his way of reporting on his magistracy. The appointment of Panganiban as Chief Justice of the Philippines calls to mind the letter of Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, regarding a "pure selection" of a so-called "natural *aristoi*" into the office of government.

Jefferson wrote: "There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents: for with these, it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the institution, the thrusts, and government of society.

"And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man in the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of society. May we not even say that that form of government is the best which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government."

One also recalls what Rufus Choate said before the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention, regarding the ideal judge he had in mind: "Give to the community such a judge, and I care little who makes the rest of the Constitution, or what party administers it. It will be a free government, I know. Let us repose, secure, under the shade of a learned, impartial and trusted magistracy, and we need no more."

Congratulations, Mr. Chief Justice! May the Almighty God be with you always.

**—EDMUNDO HOLAZO ESCALANTE,**
**retired judge and past president,**
**Integrated Bar of the Philippines,**
**Sorsogon Chapter**

# A level playing field in hiring of teachers

THIS APPEAL SHOULD HAVE been made years ago.

For so many years now, the Department of Education has had no clear, transparent and permanent rules regarding the hiring of applicants for teaching positions. Before, applicants were rated based on their scholastic records, the school where they graduated, their board rating and also their performance during the interview and demo-teaching, and on their experience by way of how many times they had been hired as substitute teachers. The more experienced an applicant was, the bigger his/her chances of being hired as a permanent, regular teacher.

Today, however, the policies and rules for hiring teacher-applicants change every time a new education secretary is appointed. And it has come to pass that the most important factor of effective teaching—that is, experience—is no longer rated! That is why many experienced teacher-applicants, those who have served many times as substitute teachers, do not get hired. They are not even ranked.

Ranked and hired instead are fresh graduates with higher grades, never mind that they have lesser teaching experience. What will happen to those with average scholastic records but with vast teaching experience, who have been waiting to be hired for 5-10 years now? Will they be forever excluded from the ranking? Will they just wait for some miracles to happen before they are hired?

We know for a fact that there are schools which offer courses in education that are no nonsense schools; they give only the grades that student-teachers deserve. And there are those that give higher grades though undeserved. I think this is what makes the DepEd's selection process in hiring teachers flawed.

Which makes for quality education: the hiring of inexperienced graduates from substandard schools because of their higher grades; or the hiring of graduates from no nonsense teachers' schools with average scholastic grades but with a creditable teaching experience behind them?

Another problem is the *padrino* system. This is still the way of life for some DepEd superiors in the countryside. How can we provide quality education with this kind of thinking?

In sum, we just want a level playing field.

**—BENJIE D. DONATO,**
**barangay secretary,**
**Bunga, Cabucgayan, Biliran**

# GMA's legacy could be bloody

I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY THAT it is the responsibility of all patriotic Filipinos to go into action and empower themselves to remove Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from Malacañang, the sooner the better. GMA is known up here as an underachiever, if not a failure. She is more focused on her political survival and not governance.

The Philippine economy under her administration is a string away from an economic meltdown, which is the springboard to hunger, chaos, civil disobedience, street killings, robbery, etc. And if this happens, she will have successfully dealt the Republic of the Philippines a death blow.

Aling Gloria, now perceived as a cheater, a liar of unbelievable proportion, a thief (who is all too ready to protect fellow thieves, who are therefore not at all afraid of being caught), has lost credibility. She should go.

A lady lawmaker once said that GMA has now her own "black army," which I believe is well-trained and well-paid, thanks or no thanks to the Filipino taxpayers. But this black army is ready to protect her and keep her in power at all costs until 2010 and, maybe, even beyond.

This could only mean that blood will inevitably spill all over in Mendiola. But this should not discourage or frighten us from upholding the dignity of the Filipino people and ensuring the survival of the Philippine republic. And GMA will make her imprint as the country's most evil president.

**—MIKE M. MORENO,**
**chair, Fil-Am Fil-Can Alliance,**
**Richmond, British Columbia,**
**Canada, filamfilcanalliance@**
**yahoo.ca**

# Back to an American colony

AFTER ALL THE YEARS OF ABUSes and atrocities committed by American soldiers stationed in US military bases in the Philippines, we, Filipinos, have not really learned our lesson. By ratifying the Visiting Forces Agreement in 1999, the Philippine Senate has somehow granted the United States the authority to colonize us once more. This was inconceivable, considering that the same Senate, in its historic decision in 1991, ended for good the existence of US military bases in our country. The VFA is not just a step backward, it is stupidity.

For one, the VFA provisions are not clearly spelled out. Not only are its provisions vague; they undermine our sovereignty. Imagine ratifying an agreement whose provisions may be in conflict with Philippine laws as well as our national interest. But obviously, this concern was disregarded by our pro-VFA senators. Now, we are reaping the consequences of their lapse in judgment.

Our experience with the United States the colonizer should have taught us to be wary and wise. But alas, our senators have short memories. Much as we want that justice be done to the rape victim and that punishment be meted out to the US Marine rapists, I doubt if we will see this happen. This is because we are up against the No. 1 superpower whose arrogance knows no bounds.

In all probability, the case will eventually be settled either diplomatically or amicably. I may be wrong. Unless, of course, our public officials, no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, will have the courage to stand for our national dignity and sovereignty as "a strong Republic" no matter the cost.

**—DAVID V. FELICIANO,**
**Adlas, Silang, Cavite**

# Story on Rizal's retraction a lie

BEFORE HE DIED AT THE AGE OF 98, mathematician-logician-philosopher-humanist Bertrand Russell said, "If we must die, let us die sober, and not drunk with lies."

As a great admirer of Jose Rizal, I believe he died sober; those in power who had him executed at the age of 30, and those who concocted his retraction story, were the ones drunk with lies.

Anyone who believes Rizal, the first great humanist the Philippines ever produced, died a coward must be engrossed in childish fairy tales.

And why do I say Rizal was a great humanist? What else do you call a man who was committed to the application of reason and science and to solving human problems of the here and now?

What else do you call a man who deplored efforts to denigrate human intelligence, who did not seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and who did not look outside nature for salvation? A man who wanted to leave this world one day a better place than he found it?

What else do you call a man who valued scientific discoveries that have contributed to the betterment of human existence, and who was concerned with securing justice and fairness by eliminating discrimination and intolerance in society?

What else do you call a man who attempted to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, nationality, creed, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and who worked for the spread of common human decency?

What else do you call a man who believed that developing his creative talents to the fullest constituted the greatest happiness in life for the here and now?

What else do you call a man who believed in the cultivation of moral excellence, respected the rights of others, believed in human integrity and was open to a critical and rational way of thinking?

What else do you call a man who was concerned with the moral education of children? Who wanted to nourish them with the passion for reason, love and compassion?

What else do you call a man who rejected the theologies of despair, the ideologies of violence and the sacraments of mediocrity?

And finally, what do you call a man who believed in optimism rather than pessimism; hope rather than despair; learning in place of dogma; truth instead of sacred lies; joy rather than guilt and sin; tolerance in place of fear; love instead of hate; compassion over selfishness; beauty instead of ugliness; and reason rather than blind faith?

Rizal, indeed, believed in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that anyone is capable of as a human being. He was the greatest of Filipino humanists. And he died intellectually sober, not drunk with religious lies.

To Jose Rizal, wherever you are, more than all the angels in heaven, I have the greatest love for you as a fellow human being, and I have the highest respect for you as a fellow Filipino.

**—POCH SUZARA,**
**poch.suzara@lycos.com**

# Lucky people of Hong Kong

FIRST OF ALL, I EXTEND MY GRAtitude to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for his all-out support for our athletes in the Southeast Asian Games. He even went out of his way to act like a beggar to raise the much-needed funds just to make sure that our athletes would be able to give their best in the 2005 SEA Games. I salute you, Sir!

However, after reading the news that Arroyo promised to treat the athletes to Disneyland in Hong Kong, I was saddened and I could only feel pity for our country again.

Yes, we won the 2005 SEA Games, but we lost in the battle to regain our pride in our country. So Hong Kong is much better than the Philippines? Incomparable to "WOW Philippines"? Very beautiful compared to Tagaytay? Chocolate Hills? Mayon Volcano, etc.? Most probably, millions of pesos were spent for that joy ride in Hong Kong! Lucky for the people of Hong Kong! But not for Filipinos. The money spent in Hong Kong could have been a big boost to our country's tourism industry.

I think Tourism Secretary Ace Durano should look into the possibility of shipping the "WOW Philippines!" taxis in London to Hong Kong. There they might yet be able to persuade the lucky people of Hong Kong, who earned from the visit of our athletes, to spend their money in the Philippines.

**—GEORIO OYALES REYES,**
**genorioreyes@yahoo.com**

# Irresponsible, lethal weapon

I FELT COMPELLED TO WRITE this letter after seeing two of the most irresponsible items in a Sunday newspaper during the Christmas holidays.

The first item that caught my attention was a picture of the mayor of San Mateo, Isabela, giving away live ducks to indigent children. This is a totally irresponsible act by an elected official, as ducks are known to be one of the carriers of the bird flu virus. Just remember the outburst triggered among government officials when a strain of the virus was found in ducks in Bulacan, although—after causing severe damage to the poultry industry—it was found not to be the H5N1 strain.

This government is paying only lip service to its vow to keep the Philippines bird flu-free.

The second item that caught my eye was what must be the most irresponsible advertisement ever dreamed up. Placed by one of the Philippines' biggest corporations, it showed a lighted fuse attached to the cap of a beer bottle that was in turn attached to a rocket stick. And it came out just when the authorities were about to start a safety campaign to prevent firecracker-related accidents. Yes, there it was, a top corporation advertising in full color what could only be described as a "lethal weapon."

**—ROBERT DIX,**
**Mangatarem, Pangasinan**

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For further details on product and weight loss, text 0917-8052468 during office hours (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.) or visit us at www.xenical.com.ph. If symptoms persist, consult your physician. *Medical Journal of Diabetes Care Vol. 27, No. 1, Jan 2004 issue by Jarl S. Torgerson MD, PHD, et al. **John Foreyt, PH.D, Justine Napier M.PH., RD and Louis Aronne, M.D., F.A.C.P., The Xenical Advantage: How to use the remarkable new FDA-Approved drug to lose weight faster and keep it off Safely and Effectively (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1998). 22-23

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## Declare Samar protected area, bishops ask gov't

**By Cyrain G. Cabuenas**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR—BISHOPS, government officials, nongovernment organizations and members of the clergy on Samar Island have come together at the bishops' residence in this capital town to press the government to declare the entire island a protected area.

The meeting, billed as "Samar Island Partnership for Peace and Development," was attended by about 60 people, including Bishops Leonardo Medroso of Borongan, Jose Palma of Calbayog and Emmanuel Trance of Catarman on Samar Island.

Also in the meeting were Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, Eastern Samar Vice Gov. Leander Geli, some mayors and civil society groups.

They discussed the DENR's lifting of the logging moratorium and the snail-paced legislation of the Samar Island Natural Park (SINP) bill.

The group agreed to immediately write Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to remind him of his commitment last December not to allow logging to resume on the island.

The group also decided to press Congress to pass the pending SINP bill.

President Macapagal-Arroyo declared the SINP in 2003 a natural park, which covers about 333,300-hectare.

But Church and environmentalist groups want Congress to pass the bill so funds could be provided and its Protected Area Management Board be given legal status to manage and implement policies for the park's protection and conservation.

Fr. Euly Belizar, a representative of the Borongan clergy, said Defensor's exit could spell trouble for the forests of Samar.

"We are back to zero," he said.

Ms Arroyo was reportedly planning to reshuffle her Cabinet and appoint a new environment secretary to replace Defensor who was said to be named chief of staff.

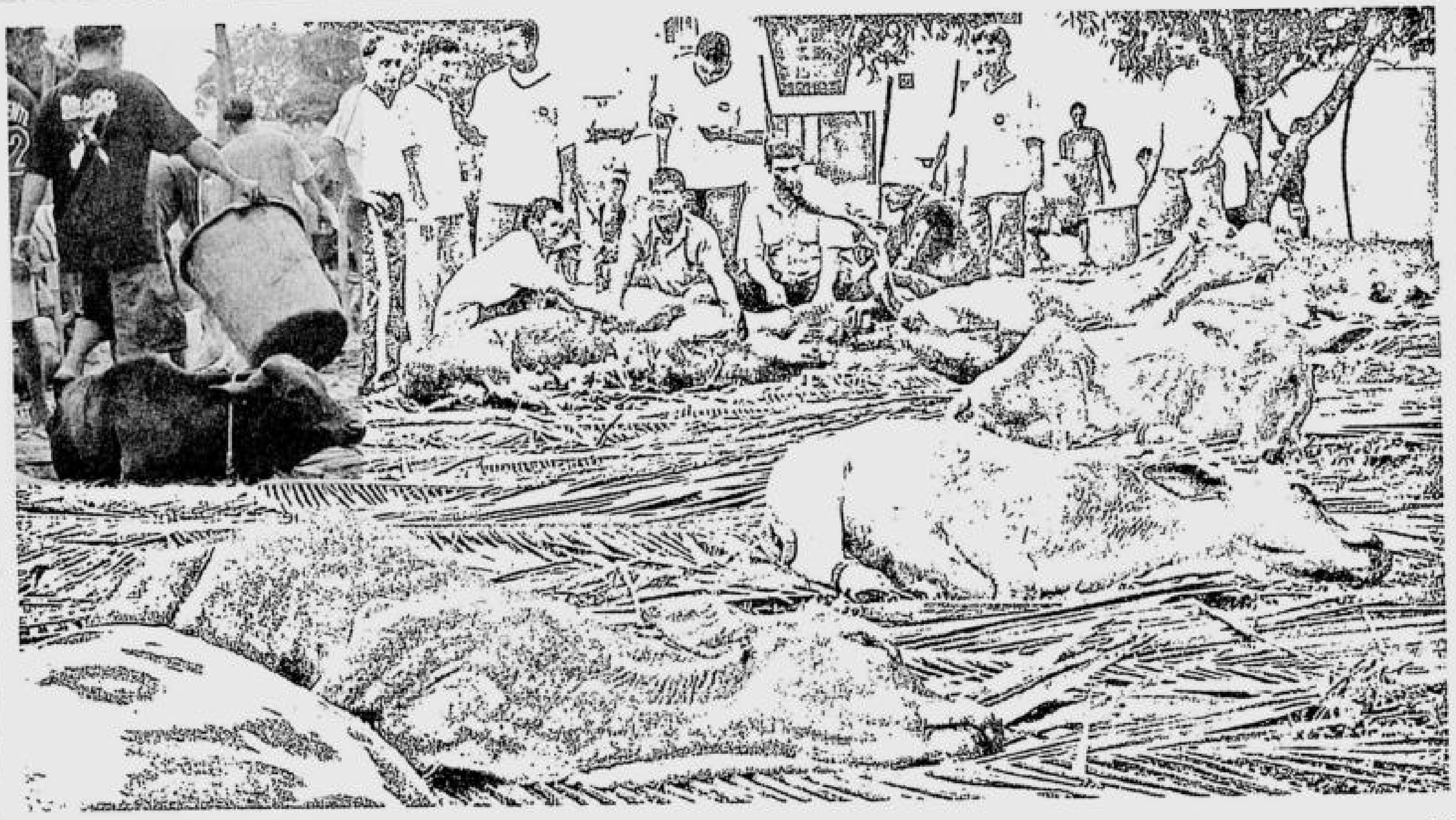
Defensor met with seven Catholic bishops of Samar, Leyte and Biliran last December and promised that his agency would not allow logging to take place on Samar.

In exchange, the bishops called off an anti-logging and anti-mining caravan and a plan to gather 200,000 signatures to support a petition seeking the cancellation of the logging permit of San Jose Timber Corp. owned by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

The DENR lifted the 16-year logging moratorium on the island when it allowed SJTC to resume operation and extended its permit by 16 years. The logging area lies in the heart of a natural park.

Bishop Medroso said Defensor's commitment was more personal and needed to be institutionalized to allay fears and suspicion.

"The commitment should be from the department and the office itself and should state how it could improve and make Samar a region of peace and development not only conserve the environment," he added.



AFP

**FEAST OF SACRIFICE**
Villagers in Zamboanga City skin one of 400 slaughtered cattle donated by officials of the Filipino Turkish Tolerance School in observance of the Muslim feast of Eid'l Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice.

## Mine spill tagged cause of fishing losses

LEGAZPI CITY—A JOINT STUDY-visit of Tanggol Kalikasan (Defend Nature) and Greenpeace International in Rapu-Rapu, Albay over the weekend confirmed the earlier claim of fishermen in the island-municipality that fishing continued to suffer despite the suspension of Lafayette Phils Inc.'s (LPI) mining operations after two mining spills late last year.

Jun Narvaez, Tanggol Kalikasan area director, said based on the joint study, most fishermen, however, remained hopeful that the local government and the LPI would help them in their struggle to find livelihood since fishing has become a poor source of income following the mining spills from LPI's operations.

"Right now, it is still very evident that their fish catch is very, very low and most of them have no other sources of income or livelihood. We just don't know how far they can live with this kind of struggle," he said.

Narvaez was accompanied by three Greenpeace staff members—Ira Baconquies and David Andrade, both toxic campaigners, and Davelyn Pastor, researcher.

The three Greenpeace representatives are all based in the country and are closely monitoring the development in the Lafayette's mining operations in Rapu-Rapu, Albay, which is considered the "flagship of the mining industry" in the Philippines after the passage of the Mining Act of 1995.

Rey Juan, Mines and Geosciences Bureau regional director, however, gave assurances that the government is continuously coordinating with LPI and the local government of Rapu-Rapu to determine how affected the fisherfolk are and what alternative livelihoods will be given to them as soon as possible.

Rod Watt, LPI country manager, refused to comment when interviewed by the INQUIRER on the fishing issue.

Instead, Watt reiterated his firm's plan to have a dialogue with the Pollution Adjudication Board regarding the P10.7-million fines imposed on LPI. Watt said LPI has not yet received a copy of the ruling.

In a joint statement, Greenpeace and Tanggol Kalikasan, said it was a sad thing that even at this point, LPI continued to keep mum on the "financial damages and support" it must extend to villagers, fishermen and other people who suffered damages the mine spills that occurred on Oct. 11 and Oct. 31 last year. *Gil Francis G. Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

## Arrival of Fil-Am soldier's body draws crowd

**By Chito A. Fuentes**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

TAGBILARAN CITY—DESPITE attempts by the American government to make it a low-key event, the arrival of slain Filipina-American Sgt. Myla Maravillosa in this city on Wednesday did not escape public scrutiny.

The Philippine Airlines plane from Manila that carried her body touched down at the Tagbilaran airport at about 9:15 a.m. as scheduled.

A policeman estimated the waiting crowd, which included Inabanga Mayor Josephine Socorro Jumamoy and Tagbilaran Mayor Dan Lim, to be not less than 300.

Nuns, teachers and students of Tagbilaran's Holy Spirit School, where Myla studied in high school before migrating to Hawaii, were among those who met her at the airport.

"A woman and soldier of deep loyalty to God and country. You are dearly missed," said a streamer from the Inabanga municipal government.

Except for one councilor who had a previous engagement, the entire Inabanga council, led by Vice Mayor Hermogenes Cenabre Jr., was at the airport.

Gov. Erico Aumentado was represented by Provincial Administrator Tomas Abapo Jr. and retired Supt. Sancho Bernales, provincial consultant on peace and order.

The arrival was extensively covered by reporters from two major broadcast networks and local media organizations.

Myla's mother, Estelita, was at the airport but did not approach the coffin, which was immediately wheeled into a waiting white hearse.

Two uniformed American soldiers, a male and a female, draped the American flag on Myla's coffin before loading it into the hearse assisted by three Filipino policemen.

Escorted by motorcycle cops, the hearse proceeded to Funeraria Gomez, a funeral parlor about 300 meters from the airport, where funeral arrangements were made to prepare the body for the 66-kilometer trip to Barangay U-og, Inabanga town. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

## Southcom head keeps mum on Faeldon video

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SOUTHERN Command chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon was silent on the latest photo and video footage of Capt. Nick Faeldon, showing the Oakwood mutineer inside the Southern Command headquarters.

Reporters familiar with the Southcom said the video and photos were taken very recently because only about a week ago, the Southcom motto was in English.

In the fresh video and photos, Faeldon said the pictures were taken beside the grandstand at the Southcom.

The grandstand is near former Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan's office.

Adan has ordered a manhunt for Faeldon.

Like his successor, Adan would also not comment on the issue.

Habacon said as long as military chief Gen. Generoso Senga was around, only he would comment on the Faeldon controvery.

Senga downplayed the latest release from Faeldon, hinting these were manipulated images.

"Nothing is impossible with technology," he said.

The Southcom video and photos were the second of such releases from Faeldon, which are apparently aimed at mocking the military's manhunt against him.

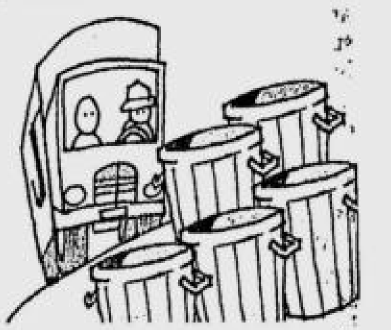
On Jan. 5, he also published photos and video allegedly taken during his "visit" to the Western Command in Palawan.

Lt. Col. Tristan Kison, military spokesperson, said the Palawan photos could be old.

Kison was also the first military officer to label the photos as "doctored." *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

## ROUNDUP

### 20,000 Davao garbage bins



DAVAO CITY—At least 20,000 garbage bins would be placed around the city and its villages as part of the city's effort to be one of the country's best city and as part of the solid waste management program of the government, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said. He said at least 6,000 plastic container bins have been put in the city. Garbage collectors will empty the bins from 6 to 9 p.m. daily, the mayor said.

*Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

### Reward for journalist's killer

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police have put up a P140,000 bounty for the capture of the suspect in the killing here of RGMA Super Radyo reporter Jonathan Abayon on Aug. 9, 2004. Supt. Willie Dangane, chief of intelligence of the Central Mindanao Police command, said the Department of Interior and Local Government approved the reward for the capture of former Army soldier William Bael, who allegedly shot Abayon inside his car while on his way home after attending a party at the house of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao. The suspect then served as one of the security escorts of Pacquiao.

*Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

### Town award for good programs

MAASIN CITY—For two years in a row, Hinunangan, a progressive Pacific town 150 km from here, became the recipient of the "Galing Pook" award for excellent and innovative measures undertaken by local government units. This year, Hinunangan beat 163 entries when it was recognized for the marine sanctuary and seaweed production project in the coastal village of Calagitan, said Antonio Cadoza, provincial director of the Department of Interior and Local Government, which runs the "Galing Pook" award.

*Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau*

### 4 slain in Laguna shooting

CALAMBA CITY—Violence marred the first day of the Coco Festival in San Pablo City after four people were killed and two others were critically injured when five unidentified armed men waylaid them inside a subdivision shortly after midnight Tuesday. San Pablo police chief Senior Supt. Elmo Francis Sarona Jimson Vergara, 17; Arnold Municia, 33; John Andrew Belen, 22; and Blas Melvin Dequina, 15, died on the spot from several bullet wounds in different parts of their bodies. Two others—Joey Belen, 21, and Aldwin Villaruel, 20—were in critical condition at the San Pablo Medical Hospital. He said the six were having a chat in front of the house of one of the victims inside the Miraflor Subdivision in Barangay Del Remedio at about 12:30 a.m. when a white Toyota Corolla car with no license plate stopped a few feet from them. Five armed men alighted from the car and shot at the victims.

*Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Fishkill damage reaches P161M

CALAMBA CITY—The damage of the recent fishkill in Taal Lake on the fishing industry in Talisay, Batangas has reached over P161 million, said Lea Villanueva, chief of the Inland Fisheries Resources Station of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources office in Tanauan City. Villanueva said more than 2,685 metric tons of *tilapia* and *bangus* died because of the fishkill. She said their assessment in the area showed that 80 percent of the 671 fish pens in Barangays Quiling, Aya and Tumaway were gravely affected by the fishkill caused by "sulphur upwelling," a sudden discharge of sulphuric acid from the bottom of the lake. The southeast monsoon wind worsened the situation as it caused the mineral deposited at the bottom of the lake to surface, thus blocking the air supply for fishes.

*Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### 2 nabbed for phone cable theft

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police arrested two men caught stealing a 50-meter telephone cable in Silang, Cavite over the weekend. Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa identified the suspects as Jeffrey Lucban, 20, and Edgardo Barrios, 18, both of Barangay Cupang, Muntinlupa City. Another suspect, Roberto Herrera, 20, eluded arrest. Verzosa said the Silang police office received a call for help from a personnel of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in Silang at about 2:30 a.m. on Saturday. He said the PLDT staff member noticed three unidentified men hauling telephone cable wires in a tricycle along the Aguinaldo Highway in Barangay Tubuan. When police arrived at the area, they saw the suspects dragging the wires worth almost P100,000. Verzosa said the suspects tried to flee but Lucban and Barrios were captured.

*Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

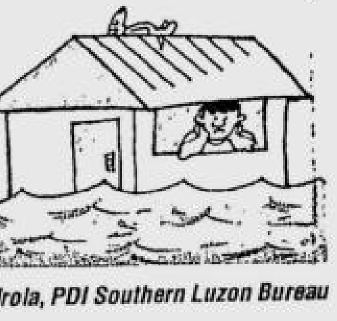
### Peso campaign vs Cha-cha

POWER TO THE PISO!

LUCENA CITY—The militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said the country's farmers will launch the Piso Laban sa Cha-cha Campaign to build up a common fund to be used in continuous protest actions against President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign to amend the Constitution. In a statement, Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos, KMP secretary general, said his group will mobilize at least 1.4 million KMP members to gather five million signatures to counter the plan of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) to collect the same number of signatures to start a people's initiative to amend the Constitution. "It is obvious that the move of Ulap is a self-serving maneuver because it will ensure a longer term for them, up to 2010 at the least," Ramos said.

*Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Held captive by floods



VICTORIA, Oriental Mindoro—Residents of Barangay Malabo, alongside Naujan Lake, said they have no choice but to stay home because their houses continue to be submerged in floodwaters. They added that even as they have become used to the yearly flooding, the situation was made worse by heavy rains in past weeks.

*Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Diarrhea outbreak contained

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The diarrhea outbreak in Bataraza, Palawan has slowly been contained as medicines and a medical team arrived in the town. No new deaths have been reported since Jan. 10 but health workers and local officials were still confirming whether the death toll (29 dead) has increased, as information from remote barangays continued to pour in. The provincial information office said the emergency medical team went to the areas where diarrhea deaths occurred and convinced everyone who was still suffering from diarrhea to seek treatment. The office of Rep. Abraham Mitra have also brought in antibiotics and other medicines. Cases of diarrhea deaths were also reported in Rizal and Quezon towns.

*Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

*Editor* **Jun Bandayrel**
*Bureau Chief* **Floreño G. Solmirano**

# Propagandist inspires Bicol literature revival

**TOMAS and Mercedes Arejola**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**THE WINNERS** of the 2005 Premio Tomas Arejola, children's story category: (From left) Sonny C. Sendon ("Maputing Agta"), Jose Jason L. Chancoco ("Ku Turion si Kulatog") and Francisco Peñones Jr. ("Kan Magutom si Butchok").
JUAN ESCANDOR JR.

**By Juan Escandor Jr.**
*Naga City*

LITERATURE IN BICOLANDIA is being revived, and the least known propagandist of the Philippine revolution, a native of Naga City, is inspiring the effort.

For two years, the Arejola Foundation has been sponsoring the "Premio Tomas Arejola" in the region's premier city in honor of Tomas Arejola, a member of the elite from the then Nueva Caceres (now Naga), who joined the propaganda movement in the late 1800s in Spain.

Carlo Arejola, 38, the revolutionary's grandnephew, said the foundation wanted to focus on the power of the pen to pursue the legacy of Tomas' "love and dedication to freedom that brings back the sense of one's self."

Carlo, who manages the foundation, explained that the Premio Tomas Arejola wanted to contribute to the "arduous task of reviving the dying Bicol language and culture." It aims to popularize the use of Bicol and generate literature in the language.

Unlike those in Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Cebuano and Tagalog, Bicol literature is not included in the prestigious Palanca Awards, he said.

According to Maria Lilia F. Realubit, a retired University of the Philippines professor, the Bicol language has several dominant dialects like those spoken in Naga (Camarines Sur), Albay, Daet (Camarines Norte), Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon, the Rinconada in the fourth district of Camarines Sur, and the Miraya in the third district of Albay.

Tomas moved within the circle of the *ilustrados* in Spain and Europe while studying law at the Universidad Central de Madrid, Evelyn Caldera Soriano said in her book, "Two Bicolano Revolutionaries: Tomas and Ludovico Arejola," published by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts in 1999.

Tomas, she said, was an active member of the propaganda movement that sought the assimilation of the Philippines as a province of Spain.

He exchanged letters with national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, the recognized leader of the propagandists in Madrid, and Dr. Ferdinand Blumentritt, an Austrian ethnologist who actively supported the cause of the Filipinos.

Tomas also regularly associated with Antonio Luna and Miguel Morayta, two prominent figures of the La Solidaridad propaganda movement.

His older brother, Ludovico, a military officer of the revolutionary government under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, was appointed Coronel de la Milicia Territorial and tasked with organizing volunteers in Ambos Camarines (the two Camarines provinces) and Catanduanes.

Soriano, a grandniece of the Arejolas and associate professor and director of European Studies at the Ateneo de Manila University, said Tomas, though the least known of the propagandists, had written statements and position papers of the movement.

The author, who has been tracing propaganda documents, affidavits and correspondence in Europe and in museums and archives, even unraveled Tomas' skills in projecting neutrality when facing contending personalities inside the *ilustrado* circle in Madrid—the antipropaganda forces that included Wenceslao Retana, Mir Deas and Quioquiap, and the prominent propaganda forces that included Rizal and Luna.

But Tomas was among those listed as one of Rizal's sympathizers in Luna's letter to the national hero on Oct. 22, 1888. The propaganda movement was then supporting Rizal to lead a Filipino Colony.

Soriano also found that her granduncle had been elected member of the Malolos Congress under Aguinaldo's revolutionary government.

But she said Tomas was unable to come home to fulfill his duties and was instead directed by the revolutionary leaders to organize a revolutionary committee in Madrid. Tomas represented the Malolos government abroad and was a signatory to the Malolos Constitution.

His remarkable career as a propagandist, revolutionary, negotiator and political leader spanned decades, from the revolution against Spain to the American war of subjugation to the First Philippine Assembly.

He died a statesman in 1926.

## Instrument of change

The scope of this year's Premio Tomas Arejola is being widened to include poetry, short stories, essay, drama and novel, Carlo said.

Only poetry and fiction were included in the first contest in 2004. The first entries were submitted by both old and young writers. Kristian Cordero and Rizalde Manrique, both in their 20s, emerged as winners.

Carlo mused that even in the second Premio Tomas Arejola in December last year, the finalists in the children's story and one-act play (the new categories) were mostly young writers.

Jose Jason L. Chancoco and Sonny C. Sendon, both in their 20s, and Francisco Peñones, who is in his 50s, won in the children's story category.

Carlo said the popularization of children's literature in Bicol could help in the propagation and appreciation of the Bicol language.

"It's really a good thing that there were lots of entries from young writers. I am happy that there is hope to keep our advocacy for Bicol language's preservation and appreciation," he said.

But the judges—Realubit, Department of Education Director Orfelina O. Tuy and Prof. Lorna Billanes, a Doctor of Philosophy candidate for creative writing at Miriam College—did not give recognition to the one-act play entries in the Second Premio Tomas Arejola.

Realubit, chair of the board of judges, said entries in this category did not qualify because of format problems.

Entries for this year's awards will be accepted beginning February. "It will be open to all writers in Bicol language and no age limit is imposed. But writers under 18 years old are required to submit their parents' consent," Carlo said.

## Writers' workshops

The Tomas Arejola Foundation conducts writers' workshops before the works for the contest are chosen. This year, applicants who are at least 16 years old and have submitted either three poems, one short story or one one-act play written in Bicol will be admitted to the workshops.

Vice Mayor Gabriel Bordado, who is also a writer, recalled that the interest in reviving Bicol literature started in 1973 with the organization of the Heritage Society.

But it did not gain momentum until the writers' workshop in 1993, which was facilitated by known writers like Teo Antonio and Jose Dalisay Jr., he said.

Since then, several initiatives to revive Bicol literature have been undertaken. Among them, Bordado said, were the formation of the writers' group "Kabulig," the publication of "Mga Tula Para ki Ina," and the meeting of Bicol writers in Aquinas University in 2000.

The Premio Tomas Arejola is a noble initiative beyond politics that inspires, gives guidance and incentives and serves as a lighthouse to writers in Bicol, he said.

*(FOR more information on the Third Premio Tomas Arejola, contact Carlo Arejola, managing director of The Tomas Arejola Foundation, 2nd Floor, Dabu Building, Elias Angeles Street, Naga City, or email SuratBikol@gmail.com)*

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# 3 suspected car thieves shot dead in QC

By DJ Yap

THREE SUSPECTED CAR THIEVES on board a stolen businessman's sports utility vehicle (SUV) were shot dead before midnight Tuesday in a shootout with Quezon City policemen.

The suspects, who have yet to be identified, were all in their early 30s.

Investigators said the three men took off with the Isuzu Crosswind of businessman Marwin Luz at about 9:20 p.m. while he was in a convenience store on Tandang Sora Avenue.

Luz told police he tried to run after the suspects when he saw them in his car as he was on his way out of the store, but one of them had pointed a gun at him.

The businessman quickly reported the incident to the Talipapa Police Station.

At 10:20 p.m., operatives of the city police's District Intelligence and Investigation Division (DIID) on board a marked police vehicle spotted Luz's van, with plate number XTF 526, on Old Sauyo Road in Novaliches.

## Chase

SPO1 Felipe Tumibay said they asked the men inside the SUV to pull over, but the driver drove off at full speed, prompting the policemen to give chase.

The operatives caught up with the suspects at the corner of Manchester and Old Sauyo Roads, according to SPO4 Gloriano Manalo.

Instead of giving up, the suspects alighted from the van and allegedly began firing at them, police said.

The DIID agents fired back, killing all three.

Police recovered a .38-caliber Smith and Wesson gun, a .38-caliber gun, an Omega 12-gauge shotgun, and a MK2 fragmentation hand grenade from the suspects.

Manalo said the three men could be members of the "Pagdanganan Group," a notorious band of car thieves operating in Metro Manila.

The alleged shootout occurred a day after two other suspected car thieves were shot dead on Monday night by the city police's Investigation Division.

Peter Bautista and Andriano Hernandez were gunned down at the corner of Scout Alcaraz and Kanlaon Streets in Barangay Maharlika after trying to elude police. Cornered, the pair allegedly fired at the police.

The suspects were driving a Hyundai Starex van which they allegedly stole from Korean missionary Ki Soo Han between Jan. 8 and 9, according to the police.

## METROBRIEFS

### Fire hits San Mateo school

A FIRE razed a pre-school building in San Mateo, Rizal, yesterday morning, damaging an estimated P2 million worth of property. No one was hurt as the fire broke out during a break while teachers and students were outside eating snacks. The fire which hit the Maranatha Christian Academy School on Gen. Luna Street in Barangay Gitnang Bayan II quickly spread, even damaging a nearby two-story house owned by Reynaldo Buenviaje. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

### 3 cops charged with extortion

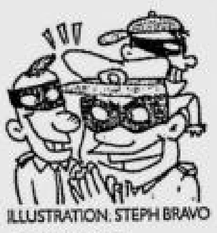
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

THREE Quezon City policemen are in trouble for allegedly demanding P35,000 from a cellphone technician, in exchange for letting him off over a nonexistent traffic offense. PO3 Ricardo Calampiano, PO3 Johnel Guzman and PO2 Marcelo Tacdao, of the city police's mobile patrol unit, have been charged with robbery for allegedly extorting money and valuables from Neil Apo. In a complaint filed in the Quezon City prosecutor's office, Apo said he and Danilo Brequillo were apprehended on Nov. 2 in Tandang Sora by the policemen for an unspecified offense. Instead of taking them to the police station, however, Apo said the policemen asked him to hand over his belt bag containing P35,000, his Nokia 3120 mobile phone worth P7,000, and a wallet with P1,000 in it. *DJ Yap*

### 'Serbisyong Totoo'

TAGUIG City residents don't have to go to City Hall regularly to avail of basic services. Under Mayor Freddie Tinga's "Serbisyong Totoo, Para sa Iyo" program, government agencies would set up a booth at least once a month in each of the city's 18 barangays. The City Health and Nutrition Office will offer free vitamins and weight and blood pressure monitoring. Residents looking for jobs may go to the Public Employment Services Office booth, while the Agriculture booth will give out free anti-rabies vaccines to dog owners. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

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# Traffic aides face arrest in Makati

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE TURF WAR BETWEEN THE Makati City government and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) took an ugly turn yesterday when Mayor Jejomar Binay ordered the arrest of the agency's traffic enforcers who continue to apprehend traffic violators in the city.

"Once they apprehend motorists and issue TVRs (Traffic Violation Receipts), the MMDA traffic enforcers will be arrested," Binay said in a statement.

The directive, according to City Hall, was "in keeping with the recent ruling of the Supreme Court which said the MMDA has no police powers and can only enforce ordinances approved by city councils and other legitimate sources."

MMDA traffic enforcers should therefore confine themselves to directing traffic flow, Binay added.

"We'll see if they would really make arrests," said MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno, when reached for comment. In the meantime, their enforcers would stay on the road and continue doing their job, he added.

"The Supreme Court said that is our duty and is an exercise of our mandate. If they do make arrests, maybe we could ask then what the basis of their arrest would be," Nacianceno told the INQUIRER.

Binay's order came a day after the city government said that it would be taking over the management of traffic in the city's national roads from the MMDA..

National roads in Makati include the busy thoroughfares of J.P. Rizal Street, Makati Avenue, Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road) and parts of major highways such as Edsa, President Sergio Osmeña Avenue, and C-5 Road.

# FVR should not impose his own style on GMA

ON TARGET
*Ramon Tulfo*

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. Ramos is asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down to pave the way for elections proposed by the ex-Chief Executive to be held next year.

The elections would be for a proposed change in the form of government from presidential to parliamentary in the New Constitution.

But Ms Arroyo refuses to step down, even if FVR's suggestion for her to leave the post has a hint of a veiled threat.

**It's true that FVR was one of those responsible for GMA staying on in the midst of the crisis that beset her presidency at the height of the "Hello Garci" controversy.**

But why does FVR have to rub it in? Why should he always invoke that debt of gratitude in having GMA step down before the end of her term in 2010?

**What does FVR plan to do now that GMA is standing pat on finishing her term because that was the mandate given to her by the people? If FVR and his minions say that GMA cheated in the last elections, do they have proof?**

Sen. Miriam Defenso-Santiago accused Mr. Ramos of cheating her of the presidency in the 1992 elections, but Ms Santiago wasn't able to prove it. In the same way, FVR and his minions should prove that GMA cheated in the 2004 elections.

**GMA would only step down if the New Constitution called on her to do so under the proposed parliamentary system of government.**

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said as much when he said: "The President believes in the rule of law. And as such, if the Constitution is amended and this is prescribed, we believe that the President will follow the law."

**Mr. Ramos should not impose his own style of governance on Ms Arroyo in much the same way that a parent cannot impose his or her style of running a family on his or her married offspring.**

# Apec biosafety confab set Jan. 16

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE will host a conference on biosafety among Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) member-countries on Jan. 16-18 at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City. The conference will focus on policy options for biosafety regulations in the Apec region. Delegates include policy makers and experts in agriculture, trade, environment, economics and foreign affairs.

*Republic of the Philippines*
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www philhealth gov ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2006-002 g

BIDDING FOR THE LEASE OF ADDITIONAL WAREHOUSE
(FOR THE USE OF MOTOR POOL AND SUPPLY UNITS)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2005, intends to apply the sum of Php4,320,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Lease for two (2) years of Additional Warehouse for the use of the Motor Pool and Supply Units. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Bidding for the Lease of Additional Warehouse for the use of the Motor Pool and Supply Units, with the following specifications:

I. Location

The location of the warehouse shall be within one (1) kilometer radius from the Citystate Centre. The area must not be prone to flooding.

2. Basic Requirements

2.1 Floor area : 1,000 sq.m. to 1,200 sq.m. It may be a single unit, or two (2) separate units with a total area of 1,000 sq.m. to 1,200 sq.m.
2.2 Flooring : Concrete Finish
2.3 Electricity : With Power supply and serviceable electrical lighting
2.4 Water Supply & Drainage System: With Water supply and existing/working drainage system
2.5 Office Space : With existing office space (enclosed structure)

3. Other Conditions

3.1 Free moving-in for a period of thirty (30) days.
3.2 Major repair shall be undertaken by the lessor.
3.3 Title must be free from liens and encumbrances.
3.4 Lessor guarantees peaceful, continued and uninterrupted use of the premises, with full beneficial use of the leased premises.
3.5 Repair and washing of vehicles shall be allowed at least in the one-half portion of the warehouse.
3.6 The lessor shall perform the following:
    3.6.1 Termite Control : once a year
    3.6.2 Pest and Rodent Control : every three (3) months

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of the Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Bgy. Oranbo, Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from January 13 - 27, 2006 at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Php3,000.00 cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

The PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **January 30, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. at the OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Bgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room on or before February 13, 2006, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

**Bid opening shall be on February 13, 2006, 10:30 a.m. at OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

PhilHealth shall require the prospective bidders to submit copy of contracts whether on going, completed or awarded but not yet started with the relevant period of CY 2004 and CY 2005.

The PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
**Mr. Joseph O. Vergara**
Rm 1107, 11th Floor Citystate Centre
709 Shaw Blvd., Bgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Tel. (02) 637-9999 locals 1128, 1130 and 1830
E-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735

(Sgd.) ATTY. VALENTIN C. GUANIO
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

(PDI-Jan. 12 & 22, 2006)

*Republic of the Philippines*
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www philhealth gov ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2006-001 g

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION REMITTANCE FORMS (MI-5) FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUALLY PAYING MEMBERS

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2005, intends to apply the sum of Php3,000,140.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Bidding for the Procurement of Premium Contribution Remittance Forms (MI-5) for the use of Individually Paying Members. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the printing of 55,008 pads of MI-5 forms, with the following specifications:

JOB TITLE MI-5 Remittance Form for the use of Individually Paying Members
QUANTITY : 55,008 pads (11,001,600 sheets)
(50 sets per pad @ 4 copies per set)
SIZE : Width 7 inches x Length 5 inches
MATERIAL : Imported Quality Colored Carbon-less Paper
(Image retention should last for at least 4 to 5 years)
Impression must be clear up to the last ply
1st ply - White Carbon-less paper
2nd ply - Yellow Carbon-less paper
3rd ply - Green Carbon-less paper
4th ply - Pink Carbon-less paper
Wrapping Paper Cover
Chipboard Back Cover
PROCESS : Offset Printing/Red Gum Padded
Back to back printing on all copies

*Other specifications:*

Serial Numbers : Pre-numbered (9 digits)
All Numeric (Crash Numbering)
55,008 pads (108236001 - 110986400)
Packaging : 50 pads per corrugated box
Serial numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box

Delivery of the first 18,000 pads is required 15 days after acceptance of Notice to Proceed.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from January 13 - 23, 2006 at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Php3,000.00 cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **January 25, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. at the OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd. Bgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room on or before February 8, 2006, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Late Bids shall not be accepted

**Bid opening shall be on February 8, 2006, 10:30 a.m. at the OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2004 and CY 2005 is the relevant period for contracts which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
Rm. 1107, 11th Floor Citystate Centre
709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City
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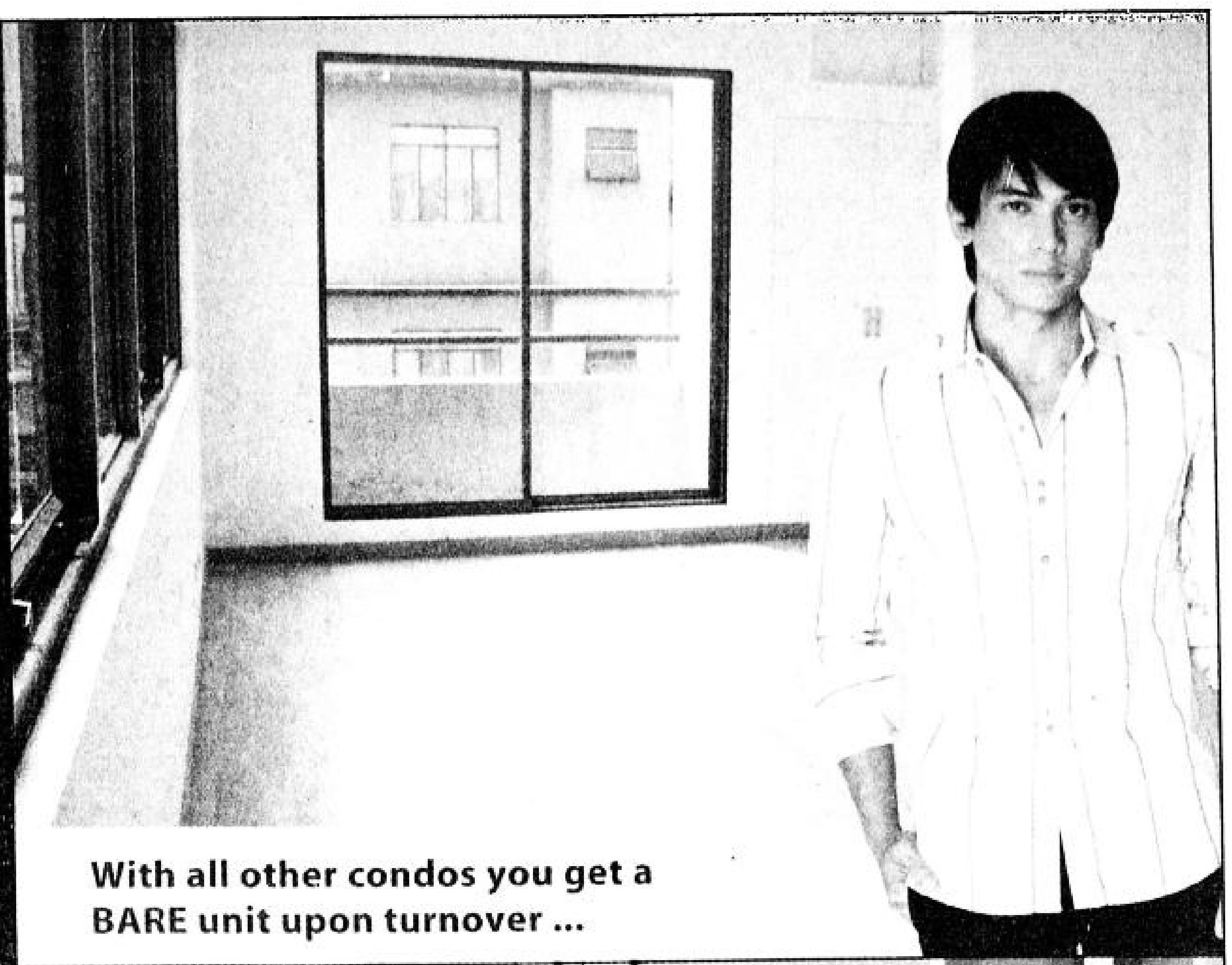

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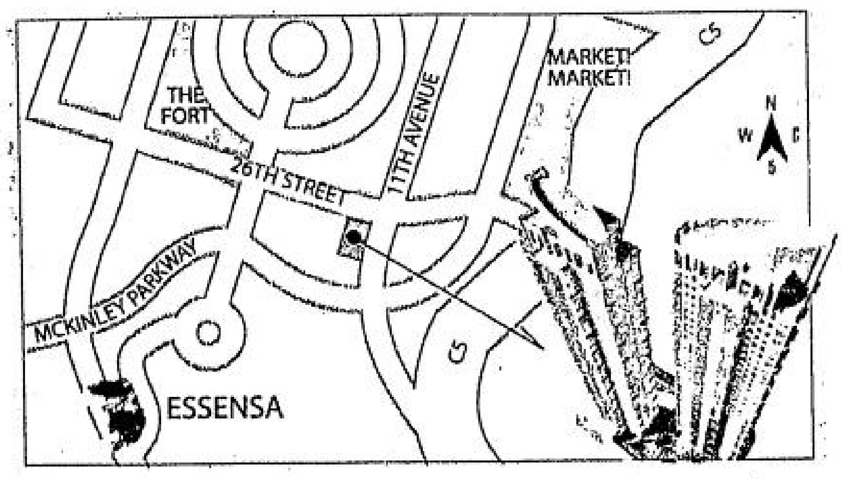
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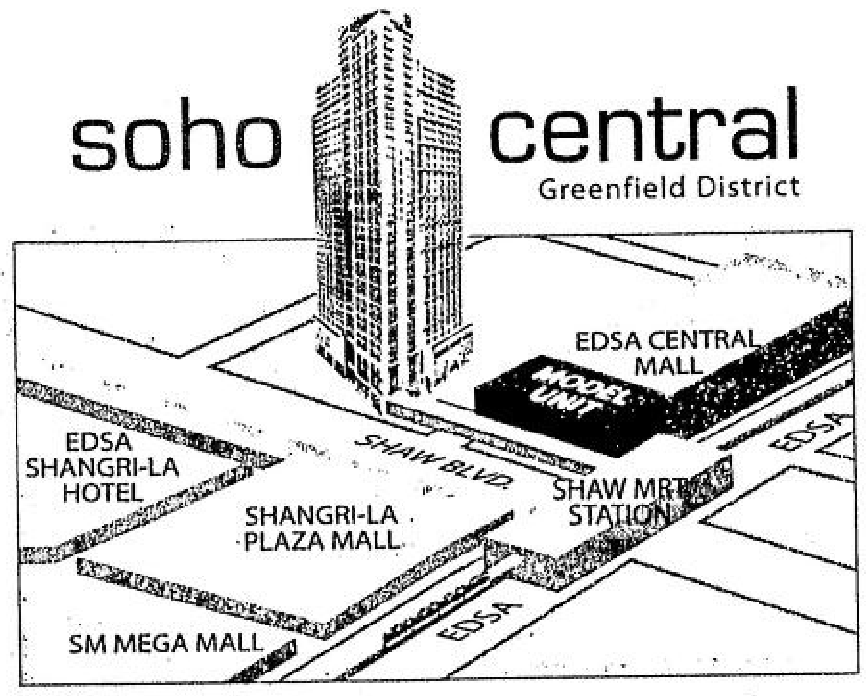
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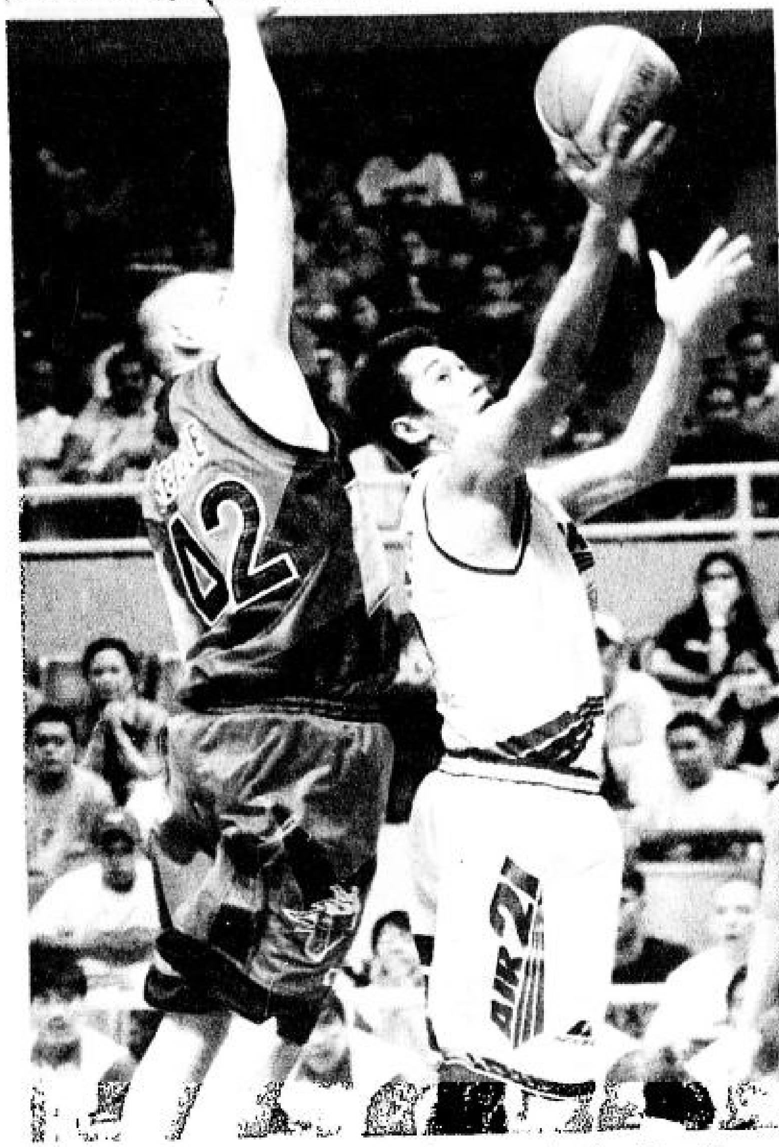
AIR21'S Wesley Gonzales goes for a lay-up against San Miguel's Danny Seigle in yesterday's game won by the Beermen. RYAN LIM

# Peña saves Beermen as Daniels crumbles

By June Navarro

DORIAN PEÑA'S PUTBACK IN THE DYING SECONDS lifted San Miguel Beer to a 104-103 squeaker over Air21 that set up their no-tomorrow wildcard showdown in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Peña caught the leather following Nic Belasco's missed tip-in and tossed it home with 1.6 ticks remaining as the Beermen stretched the best-of-three series down to a decider on Friday.

The Beermen seemed doomed after the Express took a 103-102 lead but Air21 import Sean Daniels blew four straight free throws to give SMB a final flicker of hope in the closing seconds.

Daniels went out of the court with his head bowed and hidden under his jersey in the end.

"Champions are not people who never fail but are people who never quit," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico while reciting a text message sent to him on the eve of their do-or-die tiff with the Express.

It was Georgette, Pena's wife, who sent the message, which fired up not only the San Miguel bruiser but the entire team as well.

After a three-day respite following their Game 1 debacle, the defending champions built a 20-point lead in the third on Dondon Hontiveros, Olsen Racela and Belasco's hits.

But the Express threw a smothering full-court press, forcing the Beermen into several turnovers while Renren Ritualo, Ronald Tubid and Ranidel De Ocampo torched the hoops on the other end.

Ritualo had 12 points, including three triples, De Ocampo added four point while Tubid canned a trey and a putback as the Express came within, 77-80, after the third quarter.

Danny Seigle's back-to-back jumpers made it 86-77 before Gary David clustered 13 straight points that put the Express on the driver's seat for the first time after three quarters.

**The scores:**

**SAN MIGUEL 104**—Seigle 23, Hontiveros 19, Racela 17, Ildefonso 15, Johnson 13, Peña 8, Belasco 4, Calagulo 3, Lopez 2.

**AIR21 103**—David 25, Ritualo 18, Daniels 16, De Ocampo 16, Arboleda 9, Tubid 8, Gonzales 5, De Ocampo 4, Ferriols 2, Canaleta 0, Dacia 0, Fran 0.

**Quarters:** 29-21, 58-44, 80-77, 104-103.

■ Bondad equals par 71 /A18

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Knicks continue to rise /A19

■ Hewitt, Henin-Hardenne advance in Sydney tennis/A19

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# Wizards eye semis anew vs Painters

THEIR STARS IN AWESOME forms in their last outing, the Magnolia Wizards try anew to clinch the first automatic semifinal berth in the PBL Heroes Cup today.

The Wizards aim to secure the premium slot against the streaking Rain or Shine squad at 4 p.m. at the San Andres Gym.

A victory by the Elasto Painters, however, would give them a tie for first place with the Wizards, who suffered an 81-70 upset loss to Hapee-PCU last week.

The Montana Jewels and Hapee-PCU Teethmasters, tied for third at 5-4, clash earlier at 2 p.m. for the right to remain in contention for the two outright semifinal spots.

Although Magnolia overwhelmed Rain or Shine, 74-57, in their first meeting, coach Caloy Garcia said his Elasto Painters have reached their ideal form.

"We're playing as a team right now unlike in our first meeting with Magnolia," said Garcia. "The team is peaking right. We just hope that (Jay-R) Reyes will continue producing those big numbers for us."

Showing consistent form in this conference, the 6-foot-7 Reyes finished with 14 points, 15 rebounds and four blocks in Rain or Shine's third straight win—an 83-75 decision over Far Eastern Insurance last Sunday.

But Magnolia stars Arwind Santos and Kelly Williams, who surprisingly lost their offensive touch against Hapee-PCU last Saturday, are expected to bounce back this time. The two top Wizards, who normally dish out double-double performances, combined for only 13 points against Hapee.

They were outshone by Robert Sanz, who unloaded 23 points, and Gabby Espinas, who posted 20 markers, 11 rebounds and three blocks for the Teethmasters.

"We still have a mathematical chance to be up there so we want to take that opportunity," said Hapee-PCU coach Junel Baculi.

The Jewels, however, clobbered the Teethmasters, 64-48, in their first encounter.

Last Sunday, hefty center Ken Bono also delivered a breakthrough performance by scoring 18 points in the Jewels' 62-53 triumph over Granny Goose. *Jasmine W. Payo*

| STANDINGS | W | L |
|---|---|---|
| Magnolia | 7 | 2 |
| Rain/Shine | 6 | 3 |
| Hapee-PCU | 5 | 4 |
| Montana | 5 | 4 |
| H. Centre | 5 | 5 |
| G.Goose | 5 | 5 |
| FEI | 3 | 7 |
| Toyota Otis | 2 | 8 |

**GAMES TODAY**
**(San Andres Gym)**
2 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Montana
4 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia

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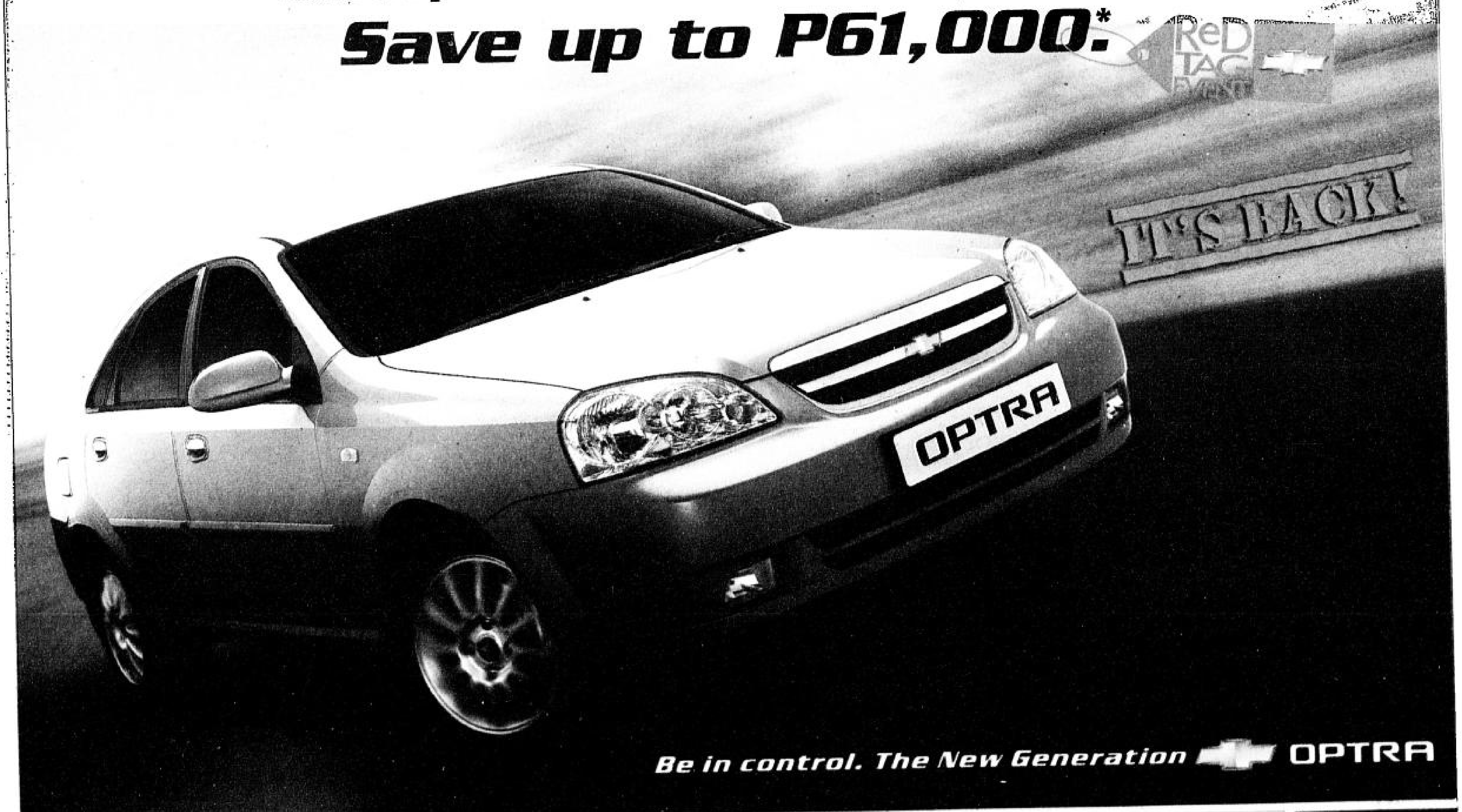

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# Solis captures 2005 TBAM Class O Championship

BONNIE SOLIS BEAT TOP QUALIFIER Arnold Lecaros to capture the Class O Championship title during the recent 2005 TBAM Annual Championships.

Lecaros topped the 9-game qualifying series with 2227, two pins ahead of Solis. Solis had to beat JC Tupaz and Nicodemus Valderrama first before meeting Lecaros in the finals.

In Class A, Mon Camba defeated Mar Serac to bag the title. Serac had previously subdued Elmer Acuesta and Marvin Reyes.

In Class B, Roel Obaob clobbered Emmanuel Allego, who earlier trounced Anton Alcazaren and David Lim, to claim the top trophy.

In Class C, Sandro Domingo prevailed over Richard Li in the championship match. Li bested Bryan Gabay and Kenneth Racho earlier.

In Group I Ladies, Girlie Solis triumphed over Chel Munsayac to win the title.

In Group II Ladies, youth bowlers dominated as Madeline Llamas downed Mades Arles to emerge champion.

There were three 300 perfect gamers during the nine-game qualifying series. They were Solis, Lecaros and Camba.

# Asian Games different ball game—POC

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE will ask all National Sports Associations to assess the performance of their athletes to determine how many sports will be represented in the Asian Games in Qatar later this year.

Saying that it is not putting premium on the gold medal winners of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last month, the POC gave the NSAs two weeks to come up with their respective recommendations before the first General Assembly on Jan. 25.

This means even triple gold medal-winning diver Sheila Mae Perez is not assured of a slot and those who fared badly in their events last month—even though the Asian Games is of a much bigger magnitude—still have a chance to wear the national colors in December.

The Philippines sent only a total of 200 athletes in the last Asian Games in South Korea, with the delegation winning just three gold medals—two from the team events in billiards and bowling, and one from Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski in equestrian.

"The Asian Games is a bigger tournament, so we need to send only the best," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, who also admitted that the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee, which he headed, "fell short of budget."

Cojuangco said that he will report the full details of the Philsoc's marketing shortfall when he graces the Philippine Sportswriters Association Annual Awards this Saturday at the Manila Pavilion.

The first POC meeting for the year at the Milky Way restaurant along Pasay Road yesterday came just days after Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said that the Asian Games will be a prelude to the 2008 Olympiad in Beijing and that "the stint will not be limited to just 10 sports."

Ramirez is batting for a wider identification of potential champions by getting the help of the NSAs involved and gave March as the deadline.

*Musong R. Castillo*

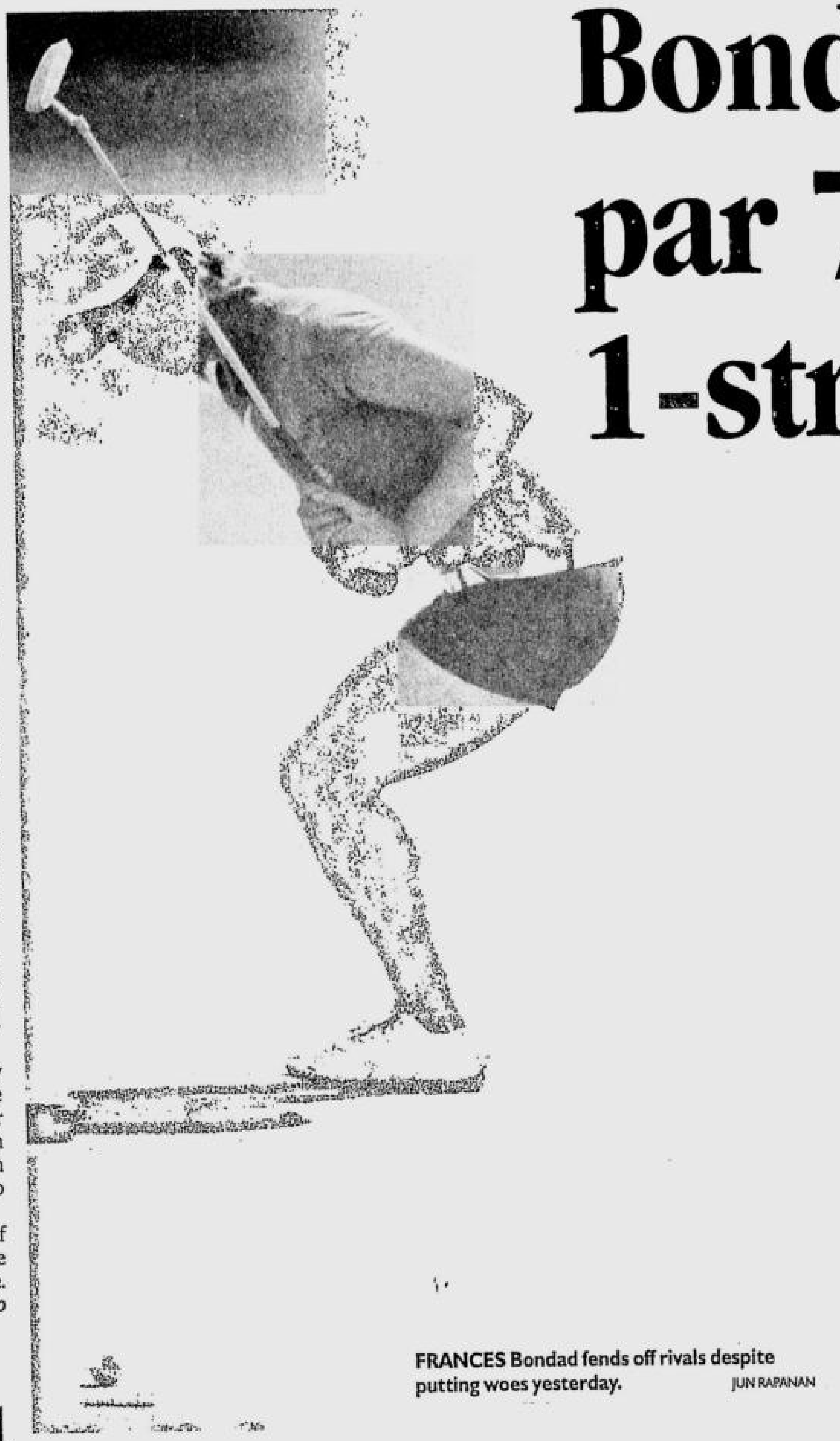
# Boys' 12-under caging launched

INTERMED MARKETING PHILIPPINES HAS launched the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament, a 5-on-5 cagefest for boys aged 12 and under.

Conceptualized by Cherifer product manager Tom Meneses together with tournament director Edmundo "Ato" Badolato of the famed San Beda high school squad and organizer Bernard Ocampo, the event aims to bolster the sports program for kids.

San Beda College hosts the kick-off leg for the 2006 season on Jan. 14-15 at the Mendiola campus gym.

Confirmed schools for the first leg include Bagong Diwa, Aurora A. Quezon, Trinidad Tecson, Beata, Diosdado Macapagal, Lopez Jaena, Moises Salvador, General L. Geronimo, Dr. Albert ES Zamora, Celedonio Salvador, San Sebastian, San Beda, Trinity, Golden Sunbeams Christian and Arellano School.



FRANCES Bondad fends off rivals despite putting woes yesterday. JUN RAPANAN

# Bondad equals par 71, snares 1-stroke lead

By Musong R. Castillo

FORMER CHAMPION FRANCES BONDAD started out hot but had to scramble to save a par-matching 71 and take a one-stroke lead after the first round of the 44th Philippine Ladies Amateur Open at the exclusive Manila Golf Club yesterday.

The 17-year-old, the winner here in 2004, threw away a birdie-birdie start due to poor putting and had to birdie the long par-4 17th to cap a 36-35 round that was good enough for a one-shot lead over Lora Roberto.

Bondad, a member of the silver medal-winning RP squad in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last year, actually missed a three-footer for birdie in the final hole to dramatize how she battled with the putter all day.

"I played pretty well, though my putting needs a lot of improvement," said the Australian-based Bondad, also the winner of the Philippine Women's Amateur last September in Bacolod.

Her bogeys came after missed-green approaches on the fourth and 15th and a three-putt miscue on the ninth hole.

Roberto, a member of the RP training pool like Bondad, gunned down five birdies but had six bogeys in an up-and-down round as she moved ahead by one stroke on joint third-placers Debbie De Villa and Korean Lee Seo-jae.

The 15-year-old De Villa gave the veterans a run for their money and could have posted a low score had she successfully rescued par in the five times she missed the green. The pint-sized ninth grader had three birdies but gave back shots on Nos. 4, 8, 11, 13 and 14.

Lee, on the other hand, had a 36-37 card.

Sri Lanka's Thuhashini Selvaratnam, the 2000 champion, posted a 74 to tie for fifth spot with Crystal Faith Superal. Dottie Ardina, 12, and Anya Tanpinco turned in 75s.

Reb Sotelo-Bareng, Cristina Corpus and Demi Mak of Hong Kong submitted 76s while Korean Woo Young-kyung, runner-up to Jayvie Agojo last year, struggled with a 77.

The winds blew in all directions and bedeviled the 86-player field, most notably former champion Carmelette Villaroman and up-and-coming Mia Piccio.

Villaroman, who won this tournament in the mid-1990s before Jennifer Rosales started a five-year reign, ballooned to a 79.

Piccio, the chubby Bacolod native who pushed Bondad to the limit in the 36-hole RP Women's Amateur finals, also skied to a 79 after a triple and a double in two holes on the back nine.

Six other players joined Piccio and Villaroman in 15th place with 79s, including jungolfer Cyna Marie Rodriguez.

Sponsors of the tournament are the First Gentleman Foundation, International Container Terminal Services Inc., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Sports Commission, Banco de Oro Private Banking, Pacific Online, Gilberto Duavit, Golden Donuts, Philippine Daily Inquirer, TNT Express, Pagcor, Philippine Airlines, Alexis Jewelers, Electrobus Consolidated, Keystone Lamps, Crucible Gallery, All Transport Network, Carlos Palanca and Hyatt Hotels.

The first round scores:

71—Frances Bondad
72—Lora Roberto
73—Debbie de Villa, Lee Seo-jae (Kor)
74—Thuhashini Selvaratnam (Sri Lanka), Crystal Faith Superal
75—Dottie Ardina, Anya Tanpinco
76—Reb Sotelo-Bareng, Cristina Corpus (US), Demi Mak (HK)
77—Woo Young-kyung (Kor)
78—Regina de Guzma, Si Ann Heng (Sing)
79—Kang Minh-ji (Kor), Lucy Landicho, Melissa Loh (Sing), Ginger Mak (HK), Beverly Mendoza, Mia Piccio, Cyna Marie Rodriguez, Carmelette Villaroman
80—Therese Dabao, Paulina Sotto, Lovelyn Guloguio

# Magada notches 70; Pagunsan a shot off

JOHOR BAHRU, MALAYSIA— BENJIE MAGADA shot a two-under-par 70 and was the best scorer among five Filipinos in the morning session of the first round at the Asian Tour 2006 Qualifying School Final Stage yesterday.

Marciano Pucay and Juvic Pagunsan had 71s, Artemio Murakami carded a 74 and Marlon Dizon scored 76.

Only the top 100 and ties after today's round will make it to the third round on Friday. A total of 217 players are battling for the 40 tour cards at stake.

Brad Kennedy of Australia took the first round morning session lead with an impressive 10-under-par 62. His countryman Robin James Hodgetts trailed second by three strokes at the Palm Resort Golf and Country Club's Allamanda course in Senai, Johor.

South Africans Martin Maritz and Garth Mulroy were third with 68s at the Cempaka course. Players with same scores on the Allamanda course were Korea's Lee Sung-man and Park Jun-won, Japan's Eiji Mizoguchi and England's Chris Gill.

*Asian Tour website*

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Department of Health Bldg 6
San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila
(632) 743-83-01 Local 1601/1650/1651

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTANT SERVICES)

Philippines
Second Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project
Project Loan No. 7290-PH

The Government of the Philippines has applied a Loan to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Loan to payments under the following contracts:

| No. | Project | Firm's Qualification |
|---|---|---|
| IFB-CS-FAP-2005-18 | Business Model for Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Facilities | The interested consulting firm must have adequate number of skilled personnel, basically composed by the following: (1) Business Planning Specialist, (2) Organizational Development Specialist/Training Specialist. |
| IFB-CS-FAP-2005-19 | Communication and Advocacy Strategy to Effect Positive Behavior Change | A full service professional advertising agency experienced in large-scale socially oriented communication projects in the Philippine context. The team should basically be composed of the following. (1) Team Leader (2) Community Development Specialist (3) Communication Specialist (4) Researcher |

The Department of Health now invites eligible consulting firms to express interest in providing the services for the above-mentioned projects. The consultant must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (i.e. brochures, description of similar assignments undertaken, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills of key staff, job capacity of the firm, and other information that could establish the firm's qualification).

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers dated May 2004 (the Consultant Guidelines).

Expressions of interest and all requested information from the consultants must be delivered to the address below by no later than 2 February 2006.

ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Chairperson
Central Office Bids and Awards Committee
1/F Building 6, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel. #. 7438301 loc. 1601, 1650, 1651, 1302, 1304, 1326
Telefax No. 7116265
Email: whsm@doh.gov.ph

Interested consultants may download eligibility and shortlisting requirements including prescribed formats to be used from the DOH Website www.doh.gov.ph. Further information may be obtained at the afore-given address during office hours.

(Sgd.) ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary
Chairperson, Central Office Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-Jan 12 & 19, 2006)

# Saulog thwarts Jao

SAN MATEO, RIZAL—LONG-time motocross rivals Jovie Saulog and Jolet Jao turned back the hands of time and battled it out one last time in yet another classic of a race.

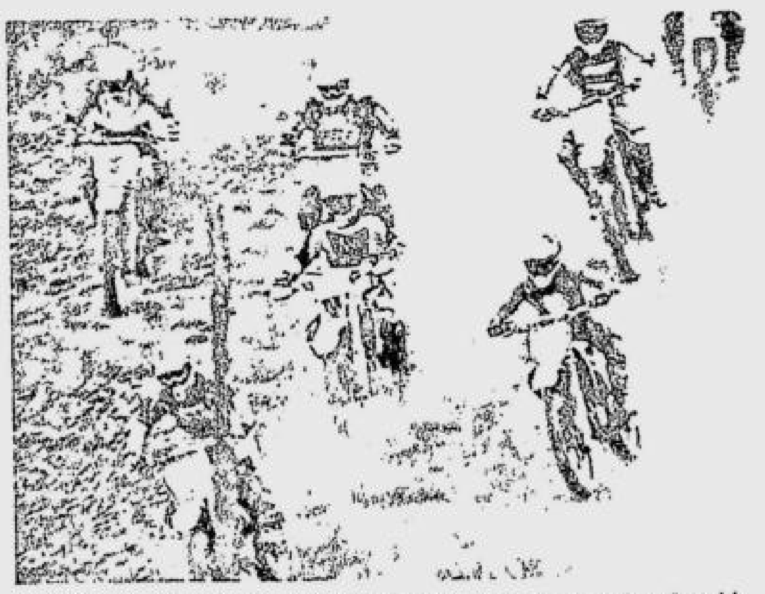
In the end, it was Saulog who emerged triumphant, winning the final race of the 5th Enduro Cross recently at Timberland Heights, Sports and Nature Club in San Mateo, Rizal, near Batasan Road, Quezon City.

Saulog ruled the premier Pro Open division.

"This one's for pride," said Saulog. "Jolet is still an amazing rider, and to beat him in the year's final race is just awesome."

Nani Pazcoguin of the organizing KP5 and of the Shell-Yamaha Racing Team shared the limelight after scoring two triumphs in the Executive and Novice Open. He crushed the challenge of Wowowee director Bobet Vidanes (2nd) and Herrera (3rd) in the Novice Open while turning back Devor Andre (2nd), Adrian Alberto (3rd) and Randie Buenaventura (4th) in the Executive category.

Other winners were Jing Jamero of the Beginner Open Production, Alex "Big Shot" Santos in the Local Enduro A, Arnel Aton in the Local Enduro B and Jack Aman in the Special Event.



JOVIE Saulog (lower left) paces the field that included Jolet Jao, Arnold Aquino, Jordan Herrera and KP5 president and organizer Nani Pazcoguin during the 5th Enduro Cross at the Timberland Heights recently.

# NBC renews ties with Sulpicio Lines

THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL CONFERENCE (NBC) and Sulpicio Lines Inc. have renewed their partnership for the second straight year.

Sulpicio Lines vice president Harold Y. Go reiterated his company's support to NBC secretary general Tito Palma recently after getting the green light from his father, CEO and executive vice president Carlos S. Go.

"We've seen the league grow, and we're happy with its direction," said Harold. "NBC's goal of searching for talents in the countryside and building a good sports program to keep the youth off the streets jibes with our company's vision."

NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla thanked Sulpicio Lines for its continued support for the league, which starts its third season on March 10.

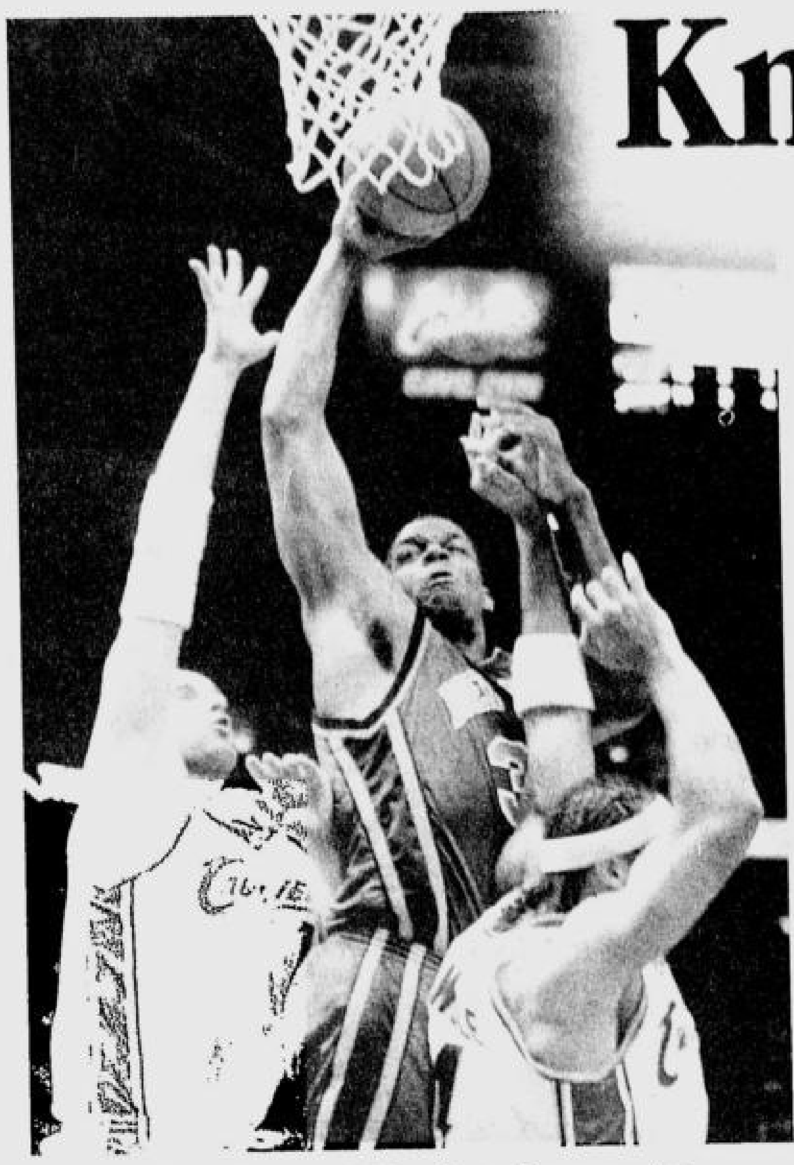
"This (tie-up with Sulpicio) is a big boost to our league," said Padilla. "This means that our players are assured of comfort and safety in their travels to Visayas and Mindanao."

Sulpicio has 19 passengers and 12 cargo and container vessels traveling to and from Bacolod, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Baybay, Ozamiz, Calubian, Ormoc, Cotabato, General Santos, Davao, Iloilo, Manila, Cebu, Zamboanga, Tacloban, Palompon, Ormoc, Catbalogan, Maasin, Calbayog, Dumaguete, Surigao, Masbate, Jagna, Tagbilaran, Iligan, Dipolog, Estancia, Puerto Princesa, Naval, Cauayan, Biliran and Maripipi.

Meanwhile, the Mayor Sammy Co Cup started yesterday in Pagadian City with Tribu Sugbu facing Spring Oil and Pagadian battling N. Cotabato.

# Knicks continue to rise

## San Antonio ends amazing New Jersey run



**NEW YORK** guard Stephon Marbury (center) soars over two Cleveland defenders to lead the Knicks past the Cavaliers. REUTERS

CLEVELAND—JAMAL CRAWFORD SCORED 26 POINTS, 20 IN the second half and New York held the Cleveland Cavaliers to 12 points in the fourth quarter as the Knicks won their season-high fourth straight 92-84 in the NBA on Tuesday.

Stephon Marbury added 22 points as the Knicks, suddenly playing their best of the season, also won their first road game since Dec. 6.

Cleveland wasted another superb game from LeBron James, who finished with 36 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in 46 minutes.

James became the first NBA player to get at least 30 points, seven rebounds and five assists in seven straight games since Oscar Robertson in 1966.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 27 points, going 13-for-15 from the free throw line, and the Spurs snapped New Jersey's 10-game winning streak by tripping the Nets, 96-91.

The Spurs withstood a late surge from the Nets and extended their home winning streak to 12.

Vince Carter, the league's eighth-leading scorer with 25.5 points per game, scored 34 on 11 for 29 shooting. Jason Kidd had 15 points and six assists for the Nets, who played without the injured Richard Jefferson.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Raymond Felton made a running jumper with 20 seconds to play in the second overtime, then hit a pair of free throws to seal the Bobcats' 111-106 double overtime victory over the Houston Rockets.

The win was costly for the Bobcats, though. Emeka Okafor returned from an eight-game absence with a sprained ankle, only to re-injure himself late in the second overtime.

Bobcats point guard Brevin Knight was also sidelined in the final minutes with a sore back.

But the Rockets were also thin: Yao Ming and Tracy McGrady were back in Houston with injuries, and Juwan Howard and Rafer Alston both fouled out in second overtime.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Mike Miller had 21 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, recording the Grizzlies' first triple-double since moving from Vancouver, and Memphis crushed the Sacramento Kings, 99-85.

Miller was 8-of-16 from the field, including 4-of-9 from outside the arc. He grabbed his 10th rebound with just over a minute left, drawing a roar from the home crowd.

Pau Gasol led Memphis with 27 points, going 12-of-18 from the field, while Hakim Warrick scored 16.

In Oklahoma City, Richard Hamilton scored 30 points, including 20 in the second half, and Detroit rallied to beat New Orleans, 96-86.

Chauncey Billups added 18 points for the Pistons, who improved their NBA best record to 27-5.

In Atlanta, Ricky Davis converted a three-point play with 1:40 left to give Boston its first lead since the opening quarter, and the Celtics held on to beat the Atlanta Hawks, 98-94.

Paul Pierce scored 27 points and Davis added 21 to lead the Celtics, who denied Atlanta its first three-game winning streak since April 2004.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 22 points, and the Bucks snapped a three-game losing streak by beating slumping Minnesota, 95-92.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 43 points, including the game-winner with 2.9 seconds left in the third overtime, to lead the Nuggets past the Phoenix Suns, 139-137.

After Anthony swished a short jumper, Eddie House was short on a long jumper after a time-out. Shawn Marion tried unsuccessfully to toss it back up as the buzzer sounded.

Earl Boykins added a career-best 33 points for the Nuggets in their first triple-overtime game in a decade. It was the Suns' second triple-overtime in nine days: They lost at New York on Jan. 2.

In Los Angeles, Cuttino Mobley scored 18 points and the Clippers sent the Orlando Magic to their fifth straight road loss, 90-73. *AP*

**NBA on Solar:** 9:30 a.m.—Sacramento vs Houston (replay at 9 p.m.)

# Federer bundled out of Kooyong Classic

MELBOURNE—GERMANY'S TOMMY Haas upset world No. 1 Roger Federer, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, at the invitational Kooyong Classic on Wednesday.

The loss meant the Swiss will be unable to defend his title at the eight-man event. But neither the Swiss nor world No. 3 Andy Roddick believe the defeat will affect Federer's chances at the Australian Open, which starts next week.

"I wouldn't read too much into it," Roddick told reporters after accounting for French teenager Gael Monfils, 6-2 6-2. "I'm going to stress this again—this is a tune-up, an exhibition week."

"Everyone is trying to find their form and everyone is making sure they're ready to go next week," the American said.

Federer appeared to struggle with his timing, hitting several forehands either long or wide, while Haas scrambled for every point, producing a string of spectacular passing shots.

World No. 5 David Nalbandian cut short his preparations for the year's opening grand slam in Melbourne by retiring with an upset stomach while trailing Germany's Nicolas Kiefer, 6-3, 3-2. *Reuters*

# Rahman, Toney gear up for WBC title bout

NEW YORK—HASIM RAHMAN AND JAMES Toney just traded insults this time.

Less than a month after scuffling on Toney's wedding day, the two showed up for a mostly calm news conference at a ritzy restaurant in Central Park on Tuesday to promote their bout for the WBC heavyweight championship on March 18 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Rahman and Toney had to be separated after running into each other on Dec. 20 at a resort in Cancun, Mexico, where the WBC was holding an awards ceremony.

"He tried to slap me, but he missed and scratched me like a little woman," Toney said. "He's going to get his payback. It will go four to five rounds. I'm not going to play with him."

The fight will be Rahman's first title defense since being handed the WBC belt when former champion Vitali Klitschko retired in November with a knee injury.

Bob Arum, who is promoting Rahman with Top Rank, said his fighter will receive approximately $2.5 million to $3 million (euro2 million to euro2.4 million), while Toney will earn $2 million (euro1.6 million).

"There's only one man in the heavyweight division that can bring the best out of me, and that's James Toney," Rahman said. "He's probably the slickest heavyweight out there. I will have a number of title defenses, it's just starting with James."

The only fireworks came when "Lights Out" Toney interrupted "The Rock."

"The worst thing you can do is stand in front of me," Rahman said.

"I'm going to be in there all day," Toney said. *AP*

# Hewitt, Henin-Hardenne advance in Sydney tennis

**LLEYTON** Hewitt spices up his win with a fancy shot between his legs. REUTERS

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—TOP-SEEDED LLEYTON Hewitt overcame the stomach virus that almost caused his early exit from the Sydney International, advancing to the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-4 win Wednesday over Austria's Jurgen Melzer.

Defending champion Hewitt needed just 38 minutes to win the first set.

Meanwhile, Belgium's Kim Clijsters withdrew from the tournament with an acute muscle strain of the left hip. Clijsters was scheduled to play Italian Francesca Schiavone in a quarterfinal Wednesday night.

After losing his serve to open the second, Hewitt won the next five games to take control of the match.

A four-time winner at this tournament, Hewitt will play the winner of the later match between Australian wild-card entry Chris Guccione and Andreas Seppi of Italy.

Hewitt struggled with stomach pain in his first-round win over Vincent Spadea.

On the women's side, fifth-seeded Justine Henin-Hardenne moved into a semifinal against sixth-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova after No. 4 Nadia Petrova withdrew before their quarterfinal match because of a groin strain.

Kuznetsova, the 2004 US Open champion, overpowered Serbian Ana Ivanovic, 7-6 (3) 6-3. Ivanovic had upset Amelie Mauresmo in the second round. *AP*

## SPORTSWATCH

### Dalawahan chess team Saturday

THE MCC 2050 below Dalawahan chess team tournament reels off at 11 a.m. on Saturday at the club's headquarters at the 4F of J & F Divino Bldg. near LRT 2 Anonas Station in Quezon City. Each entry can be a tandem of a master and a kiddie player or two non-masters—beginners, unrated or rated provided their average standard rating is not over 2050. The two-day event will employ the six-round Swiss in selecting the top four finishers who will receive cash prizes. The top prize is P5,000. Top board performers will be awarded P1,000 each. Registration fee is P700. Participants must register at the venue site at least before the tournament starts or call 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069 or 0922-539-7392.

### Las Piñas 4-cock derby today

WELL-KNOWN cockers and breeders of Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal and Batangas challenge one another in a special 4-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. More than 60 fights are scheduled. The derby, with Danny Alejo as host, stakes a guaranteed prize of P300,000. Entry fee is P10,000. Participants must submit their entries until 2 p.m. today. For details, call 873-1040 and 874-3910. Slated on Monday is the Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan with P500,000 guaranteed prize and entry fee of P2,200. The super cockfest will be hosted by Paeng Arciaga, coliseum manager Alex Tobias and Big Boy group. All Fastest Win events promoted by Arciaga attracted an average of more than 300 entries.

### Makati Coliseum hosts cockfest

COCKFIGHTING action resumes at the air-conditioned Makati Coliseum as the FTE Happy Gamefarms 4-cock derby rages at 5 p.m. today with 64 fights on tap. A cash prize of P300,000 await the winners. The derby will be supported by the WTJ Group of Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Set to unleash their winningest gamebirds are former Sen. Ramon Revilla, PCAP champions Emil Chua and Manny Pacquiao, Lito Alcantara, Butchoy Olano, Ric Aquino, Efren Canlas, Noel Bunoy, A. Tuazon, Boy Javier, Pete and Eddie Ison, Jerry Sunga, Leo Magpantay, Lino Zaraspe, Ramon Torres, William Go, Ram Lopez, Jun Mendoza, Toto Lacson and Rewald de Jesus. Meanwhile, the second Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby is scheduled on Jan. 23. For inquiries, call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

### 'Wild Man' strikes again

EXTREME trail master Arnold "Wild Man" Aquino emerged as the highest non-professional rider during the fifth Endurocross at the Timberland Heights in San Mateo, Rizal, recently. Riding a trusty KTM 450 EXC, Aquino finished third behind multititled riders Jovie Saulog and Jolet Jao. "I'm proud of my performance during the race," said Aquino, who is supported by Wildman Adventure Products. "The route was very technical and there were a couple of very slippery uphills just after creek crossings. The key is to quickly determine the correct line to obtain enough traction to make it up the hill," explained Aquino, who earned the nickname Wild Man for his unrestrained riding style.

### Southern Tagalog basketball elims

THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines (BAP) Region IV will be staging the 3rd Southern Tagalog Students Basketball Championship on Jan. 22 to 28 at the Siniloan Gym in Siniloan, Laguna. Held in cooperation with Siniloan, Laguna Mayor Guillermo de Leon Asero, BAP Regional Director Johnny Tam, Regional Commissioner Ding Andres, BAP Provincial Director Gil Tolentino and BAP R-IV general secretary Andrew Ayson, the week-long event will serve as a qualifying tournament for the 60th National Students Basketball Championships which will be held late February. Expected to participate in the tournament are schools, colleges and universities from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Romblon, Marinduque and Occidental and Oriental Mindoro.

# No promises, please

**SPECTATOR**

*Al S. Mendoza*

I DO NOT WISH TO KNOW THE REASON behind the sudden decision of GMA to grace the PSA Awards Night on Jan. 14 at the Manila Pavilion. No need. I might just be disappointed.

Initially, she said she might not be able to attend the affair due to pressing affairs of the state. She told sports editors she had invited for dinner at Malacañang about that just a while back.

And now this: A promise to attend the event honoring the best and the brightest athletes of 2005.

Will I put my hands together?

I don't think so. No, I don't think I should, or would.

The last time I did that, in 2001 during a Rizal Day celebration, I regretted having done it.

You remember that day, a Rizal Day, when GMA said she wouldn't run for president?

Well, she copped out and ran in 2004. And, as fate would have it, she won.

Look around you now and see the aftermath of that turnaround.

A nation in turmoil, beset both with political and economic woes, hungry for social justice, fairness and equality, mired in corruption from the high and mighty to the low and measly.

A nation bereft of dignity, slowly but surely losing practically its brain/work force, if not its supposedly hard-working, eternally smiling, mostly impeccably intelligent, God-fearing people, to countries willing to embrace them as their own.

A nation scarred almost beyond surgery, teetering between life and death, its three former Presidents not knowing anymore whether or not keeping, if not supporting, their successor would mean salvation for the race.

The country is fast losing its once lofty image on the world stage—if it hasn't lost it yet. There's no relief in sight—not in the immediate future. What had been gained since the Marcos fall has now vanished "in the haste," as The Beatles sang it.

The Edsa of '86 opened doors for a renaissance, and the Edsa of '01 signaled a resurgence in economic uplift.

All of that has gone down the drain. And we thought Ferdie and Erap were the culprits.

We should have known better.

But then, history is replete with disasters, and the present dispensation is no exception.

I don't know even if GMA's decision to join the athletes on their night of nights would be wise or not. It has always been said that in sports, everybody is co-equal. A king can play chess with a commoner, a caddie can play golf with a statesman.

Will GMA exchange pleasantries with the athletes on Jan. 14?

Fine if she will. As I said, sports has been known to be a great equalizer. But beware of foxes clothed in sheep skin. Politicians can lie at each other but not athletes. The score of any ball game, the clocking of any swimmer, the nod of any diving judge, they can't be manufactured. The referee's call is never transmitted through a cell phone. The most adroit politician can never score one over any athlete, except when the arena of battle is the hall of Congress or the Heroes Hall of Malacañang. An athlete can be fooled, but he knows it when he is being fooled all of the time.

Will GMA crack jokes to the athletes on Jan. 14?

Fine if she will. I just hope she doesn't make promises, though. The last time she did, in Rizal Day 2001, the country plunged into depths of despair.

Look, you are a President and you can't keep your promise, what does that make you?

Worst than a scorpion, whose ready excuse each time it stings is, "I can't help it!"

* * *

**FASTBREAK.** My boyhood friend now based in New York for years, Renato E.O. Valdez, is in town with his wife, Muriel, for a much-needed vacation. Welcome home, "shalow."

* * *

*Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net*

## RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Sweet Inspiration 5. Ikaw Lamang 1. Mini Skirt 2. Candid 6.

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Golden Fantasy 2. Gemstone 7. Western Legend 1. Pay To See 3.

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Puppy Dog Tail 4. Madam Cognac/Coromel 1. Puede Ba 6. District Three 2.

Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Clear Stone 5. Bunker Buster 8. Going Strike 6. Modern Spirit 2.

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Spectacular Play 1. La Bella Rosa 2. Ruah 3. Maria Makiling 4.

Race 6—(Penta/Tri)—Gold Is Gold 2. U Are My Sunshine 3. Forver Joyce 9. Scrap Of Gold 4. Burst Of Speed 8.

Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—La Signorina/Common Goal 3. El Love Senora 2. Just A Moment 5. Earth Wind N Fire 6.

Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—Lazt Hazm/Teetotal 1. Ahoy My Boy 2. Penny Wise 7. Ghurka 3.

Race 9—(S6/Qrt/Tri)—Imperator 9. Silver Dollar 10. Manila Slew 3. Dashing 4. Bullish Dream 8. Federal Court 6.

# SPORTS

# PSC agrees to hike pay of RP coaches

## But sets no definite timetable

**By Marc Anthony Reyes**

ACKNOWLEDGING THE VITAL roles they played in the successful Southeast Asian Games campaign, the Philippine Sports Commission has planned on giving the national coaches a well-deserved salary increase.

Trouble is the PSC can't say when the pay adjustments would be given.

PSC executive director Guillermo Iroy said the coaches' salary is in the agenda of the sports commission this year, although he didn't give a time frame when the adjustments would be made.

"It is already in the agenda of the PSC subject to board consideration," Iroy told the INQUIRER.

A Class A local coach receives P12,000 a month aside from meal allowances. Class B and C coaches get lower monthly pay.

"The salaries depend on the capability and credentials of the coaches," Iroy said.

The foreign coaches, now down to 10 from 16 starting this month, get $1,500 plus housing. The agency pays for foreign coaches in bowling, boxing, gymnastics and diving, among others.

Top caliber coaches like boxing's Raul Fernandez Liranza of Cuba will get $2,500 (P132,500) a month when he arrives to reassume his old post. Bowling's Purvis Granger also receives at least $1,500 monthly.

But Iroy said the national coaches will get what's due them.

The local coaches touched on the issue of increased pay a week after the SEAG mentors received P5.7 million in cash incentives from the agency for their contribution to the country's unprecedented success in the 23rd edition of the SEAG last month.

The amount was still P3.7 million short because some coaches have yet to submit the proper documentation of their respective works.

The coaches also found an ally in Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph who earlier said he would advocate for an increase in coaches salaries.

"We can't develop elite athletes if elite Filipino coaches are paid $200 a month," said Joseph, himself a longtime national coach. "I am sure with the PSC Sports Institute this can be addressed next month."

**STAR ATTRACTION: LPGA campaigner Jennifer Rosales leads the hitting of ceremonial balls in the Philippine Ladies Open last Tuesday at the Manila Golf Club. *See related story on page A18.*** JUN RAPANAN

# BAP bares busy events calendar for '06

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR LIES ahead for the Basketball Association of the Philippines based on its calendared events.

First on the list is the 60th National Students Basketball Championship, also known as the National Inter-Secondary and National Inter-Collegiate Basketball Championship, set Feb. 26 to March 4.

Regional eliminations will start simultaneously on Jan. 20 and will end on or before Feb. 20 in time for the national finals.

The announcement came a week after the Philippine Basketball Federation, which is recognized by the Philippine Olympic Committee as the national sports association for basketball, also revealed plans for holding the national students championship late next month.

The BAP release said its Executive Board, headed by former senator Joey Lina, will convene next week to discuss details on sponsorship partners and venues of the events.

BAP secretary general Graham Lim said that, for now, it's either Bacolod or Rizal Province which will likely host the National Students Championships.

Then comes the National Basketball League (NBL), which will be staged in cooperation with the Governors League of the Philippines and Department of Interior and Local Government.

Among the invited teams are Quezon Province, Negros Oriental, Rizal, Bohol, Cagayan De Oro, and Laguna.

A Korean team will see action in the National Inter-Club Championship on Feb. 7 to 14 against six local teams.

Also scheduled is the (Seaba) South East Asia Invitational Championship in March. Vying for the hosting of the event are Cebu City, Dumaguete City, Daet, Lucena City and Bacolod under BAP Regional Director Anthony Agustin of West Negros College.

For schools participating in the NCR regional elimination, registration forms may be secured at the BAP office at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. Around fifty teams are expected to participate.

Likewise, the 5th Annual Asian University Basketball Championship in June will have China, Taiwan and Korea as participants. The top three college men teams of the National Students Championship will qualify.

Myong Ji University of Korea won the title in the 4th Asian University Championship held in Dumaguete City and hosted by Gov. George Arnaiz last year.

# PSA Awards Night starts 7 Saturday

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTSWRITERS ASSOCIATION (PSA) Annual Awards Night on Jan. 14 will start earlier than usual as President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to be at the grand ballroom of the Manila Pavilion at 7.

All awardees, officials and guests are advised to be at the venue ahead of time as dinner will be served an hour before the formal program begins.

The Chief Executive is the special guest in the simple two-hour rites honoring the top sports achievers of 2005.

Together with guest of honor Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Jose 'Peping' Cojuangco and Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) chair William 'Butch' Ramirez, the Chief Executive will hand out to Team Philippines the Athlete of the Year trophy—the highest award bestowed by the country's oldest media organization in the yearly affair.

"We are requesting the awardees, guests, officials and all our friends to come as early as possible since proper protocol will be observed during the program," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya.

Team Philippines was named the 2005 Athlete of the Year following its historic triumph in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games. It was the first overall title for the Filipinos since they began competing in the biennial meet in 1977.

Diver Shiela Mae Perez heads the list of 23 major awardees.

Special citations are to be given to all SEA Games gold medal winners during the affair sponsored by Red Bull, supported by San Miguel Corp., PSC and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and to be telecast over NBN 4 on a slightly delayed basis.

Leading the recipients of 17 citations from the 56-year-old PSA is San Miguel Corp., whose P100 million donation to the First Gentleman Foundation helped fund the training of 13 National Sports Associations (NSAs) which won a total of 56 out of the 113 gold medals Team Philippines bagged.

Also to be given are the Most Out standing NSA won by the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation and the Tony Siddayao awards to young golfers Wolen Superal and Miguel Tabuena.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, January 12, 2006

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABC 5 | | | Winner TV Shopping | | Barclay's EPL | | Goals | | Sentro | Mumbai Thrillers | S.O.S | | Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko | | Big News | Rockstar (Result Show) | Inq TV | | Billboard On-Air<br>Insider |
| ABS-CBN 2 | Kapamilya Cinema | | | | Little Amy | Mr. Bean | Naruto | Amazing Twins | Meteor Garden Season 2 | TV Patrol World | Pilipinas Game KNB? | Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit | Only You | Vietnam Rose | Pinoy Big Brother | Maalaala Mo Kaya | | | |
| AXN | | CSI: Miami (Season 3) | | CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5) | | Mondo Magic | Samsung Sports World | PSI Factor (Season III) | | 24 (Season 2) | | Worst Case Scenario | | Fear Factor (Season IV) | | The World's Wildest Commercials | The World's Wildest Commercials | The Contender | |
| Cartoon Network | Johnny Bravo | Dexter's Laboratory | Powerpuff Girls | Tom & Jerry Show | Baby Looney Tunes | Codename: Kids Next Door | | The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy | | Power Rangers Wild Force | The Gransazers | Battle B-Daman | Machine Robo-Rescue | X-Men Evolution | Samurai Jack | Justice League | Static Shock | Power Rangers Wild Force | The Gransazers |
| Cinema One | | Angela Markado | | | | 9 Mornings | | | | D' Uragons | | | | Kokey | | | | Abel Villarama Armado | |
| Cinemax | | | | | Reality Bites | | | Itaka Blunt Instrument | | | | Wild Things 2: The Glades | | | Forever Young | | | 2 Fast 2 Furious (11:15PM) | |
| CNN | | | | Business International | | World News | World Sport | Larry King Live | | Business International | | World News Asia | | World News | World Sport | World News Asia | | World News | World Sport |
| Discovery Channel | | Wild Weather | | The Greatest Ever Sports Car | | Best Of Discovery 2005 | | | | Extreme Engineering | | The Ultimates | | Mythbusters | | The Greatest Tanks Ever | | Power Zone | |
| Disney Channel | Mr. Bean: The Animated Series | Totally Spies | Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny | Mickey Mouse and Friends | Lilo & Stitch | Sabrina, The Animated Series | Totally Spies | Kim Possible | Mr. Bean: The Animated Series | That's So Raven | Wonderful World Of Disney | | | Lizzie Mcguire | | Mickey Mouse and Friends | Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger | Wonderful World Of Disney | |
| ESPN | | | | | | | | | | | | Sportscenter Asia | | | | | | | |
| ETC | | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | Change of Heart | Elimidate | Blind Date | Fifth Wheel | Knock First | Ambush Makeover | Seinfeld | Good Morning Miami | Will & Grace 4 | Friends 10 | Queer Eye For The Straight Guy | | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | The Tonight Show With Jay Leno | |
| EWTN | The Catholic Faith & Vatican II | Angelus (3:15PM) | Virtue Storybook | Image Of God | Your Vocation: God's Call In Your Life | Rosary With Mother Angelica | Good Or Evil-Who Decides? | EWTN Gallery | Where God Weeps | EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa | | Catechisms And Controversies | The Word Was Made Flesh | Daily Mass (SAP) Live | | Angelus (10:15PM) | St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman | The Journey Home Encore | |
| Fox News | | Hannity & Colmes | | On The Record With Greta Van Susteren | | The O'Reilly Factor | | Your World With Neil Cavuto | | Fox & Friends | | | | | | Fox News Live | | | |
| GMA 7 | Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako | Now and Forever | Date With Tiffany | | Dragonball Z | Slam Dunk | Frog Prince | 24 Oras | | Extra Challenge | Sugo | Etheria | Starstruck 3 | Jewel In The Palace | | Magpakailanman | | | Saksi |
| Hallmark Channel | Bewitched IV | Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II | | The Hound Of The Baskervilles | | | Who's The Boss? II | Bewitched IV | The Nanny | Strong Medicine | | Judging Amy | | Jane Doe: Now You See It Now You Don't | | | Judging Amy (10:35PM) | | Strong Medicine (11:25PM) |
| HBO | The Missing (2:45 PM) | | | | | Legal Eagles | | | | Bad Boys | | | | The Core | | | | Normal (11:15PM) | |
| IBC 13 | | EZ Shop | | | | Home Shopping Network | IBC Express Balita | Pangarap Kong Jackpot | | Home Shopping Network | | ME TV | | | | | IBC News Tonite | Home Shopping Network | |
| JackTV | The Daily Show With Jon Stewart | The Late Show With David Letterman | | Smackdown | | | | Jiu | Just For Laughs (Gags) | Mad TV | | That 70s Show | Arrested Development | The Late Show With David Letterman | | The Late Show With David Letterman | Comedy Central Presents | South Park | The Man Show |
| Lifestyle Network | Secret Gardens | The Fixl | Mission Organization | Carol Duvall | Molto Mario | Hot Off The Grill | Good Eats | Extreme Cuisine | Unwrapped | Tyler's Ultimate | E! News Weekend | | Good Finds | Life & Style | | E! True Hollywood Story | | Road & Track | Back To Basics |
| MTV Philippines | Moto: Ask T.A.T.U | MTV Cribs | MTV Hits | | Pimp My Ride | Pop Inc | | MTV Hits | | | | MTV Hits | Get Spotted | TRL | | Punk'D | Brand New | MTV Hits | VH1 Video Collections |
| MYX | | Rock MYX | My MYX | Mellow MYX | Urban MYX | Take 5 | MYX News | Top 5 | Star MYX | MYXILOG | Pop MYX | MYX Daily Top Ten | | MYX Presents | | MYX Bandarito | My MYX | MYX Backtrax | OPM MYX |
| National Geographic | | Megastructures | | Explorations Powered By Duracell | Egypt Detectives: Mystery of The Pharaoh's Stone | Mosquito Hell | | | | Wow! | | About Asia | | National Geographic Specials | | Megastructures | | Explorations Powered By Duracell/Storm Front/First Impressions/Primal Fear/Mood Food | Storm Stories S7 Samo Sakes Boscastle Flood |
| NBN | | Value Vision | | New Life TV Shopping | | Teledyaryo | Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya? | Tinig ng Bayan (Live) | | | | Teledyaryo | | | | Network Forum | | Bantay OCW With Susan K | |
| Nickelodeon | Blues Clues | Rugrats | Hey Arnold! | My Life As A Teenage Robot | The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron | SpongeBob SquarePants | The Fairly Odd Parents | All That | Naturally Sadie | Romeo | Drake & Josh | The Fairly Odd Parents | All Grown Up | As Told By Ginger | Rocket Power | Chalkzone | The Wild Thornberrys | The Angry Beavers | The Brothers Garcia |
| PBO | | | Maton Jesus Calderon | | | | Anghel Sa Lupa | | | | | | | | Kailangan ko'y Ikaw | | | | First Time |
| Qtv | | Bodyguard | Striker Hungry Heart | The Prince Of Tennis | MMS (My Music Station) | | Moms | | Love At Aegean Sea | Hotelier | All In | Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit | O, Mare Ko | | News On Q | Women's Desk | | Groupee TV | |
| RPN 9 | TV Shopping | | Defenders Of The Earth | Hey Arnold! | Wild Thornberries | Sponge Bob | As Told By Ginger | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | WWE Smackdown | | The Ultimate Fighter | | Revelations | | Newswatch Now | Video Hit Parade | Kasangga Mo Ang Langit | Police Hour |
| SBN 21 | | | | New Life TV Shopping | | | | Winner TV Shopping | | | | Oras Ng Himala | | Oras ng Katotohanan | | Sony Bmg Video | | | |
| Solar Sports | | Watsons Water Challenge Day1 | | | | | NBA Game Nets @ Spurs | | | | | Sportsdesk | NBA Jam | NBA Game Kings @ Rockets | NBA Game Kings @ Rockets | | | | NBA Inside Stuff |
| Sports Plus | NBA Game Phoenix @ Denver | | | | | Party Poker.com World Open 2005 | | | | | | Superbowl Stories 1 | | World Game | | AFC and NFC Wild Card Playoffs | | | |
| Star Movies | Children Of The Corn II (2:25 PM) | | | Touched | | | Spartan (5:45 PM) | | Honey<br>Blue Up The Kid | | | Drumline | | I, Robot | | | | | |
| Star World | | The Bold & The Beautiful | | American Idol 2006 | Whose Line Is It Anyway? | Angel | | The Simpsons | Malcolm In The Middle | Star News Asia | Friends | American Idol 2006 | 8 Simple Rules | The Drew Carey Show/ Scrubs (Series 2) | Less Than Perfect | Man Vs. Beast | | Friends | Scrubs |
| Studio 23 | | Yugioh Duel Monster | | UAAP | | | | Batman Beyond | Spirits | Wazzup Wazzup | The Contender | | Alias (8:20 PM) | Desperate Housewives | | News Central | Oprah | | Salt |

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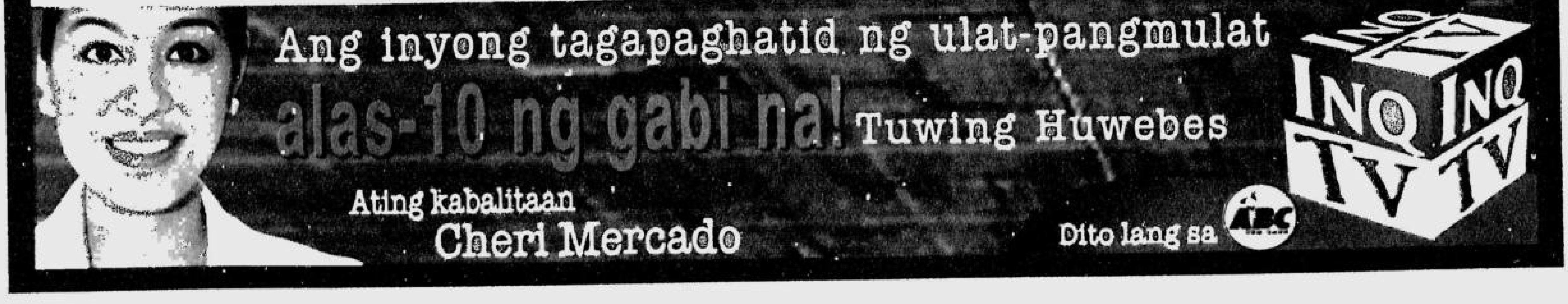

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mie G. Velarde

# US Critics Choice Awards

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA—"BROKEback Mountain" won three awards, including Best Picture and Best Director for Ang Lee, but it was Philip Seymour Hoffman's portrayal of Truman Capote that captured the Best Actor honor Monday (Tuesday in Manila) at the 11th annual Critics' Choice Awards.

George Clooney received the Freedom Award, a special tribute "for illuminating ... values of freedom, tolerance and democracy" through "Good Night, and Good Luck," his film about the McCarthy era.

Reese Witherspoon won Best Actress for the role of June Carter in the Johnny Cash biopic "Walk the Line." Michelle Williams of "Brokeback" tied for Best Supporting Actress award with Amy Adams of "Junebug."

Paul Giamatti was Best Supporting Actor for his role as a fight promoter in "Cinderella Man." Freddie Highmore won his second award for Best Young Actor for his role in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Last year, it was for "Finding Neverland."

The awards were presented by the Broadcast Film Critics Association at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

Another special award, for Distinguished Achievement in Performing Arts, went to "King Kong" for "revolutionary cinematic achievement in synthesizing visual effects with an actor's performance." Andy Serkis, whose movements and expressions were captured to animate the big ape, was among those on hand to accept.

**REESE** Witherspoon AFP

**DAKOTA** Fanning AP

## The other winners:

Acting Ensemble, "Crash"; Writer, Paul Haggis and Bobby Moresco, "Crash"; Animated Feature, "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit"; Young Actress, Dakota Fanning, "War of the Worlds."

Comedy, "The 40 Year-Old Virgin"; Family Film, "The Chronicles of Narnia"; Picture Made for TV, "Into the West"; Foreign Language Film, "Kung Fu Hustle"; Song, "Hustle & Flow," written by Al Kapone, performed by Terrence Howard; Soundtrack, "Walk the Line"; Composer, John Williams, "Memoirs of a Geisha." Documentary Feature, "March of the Penguins." *AP*

# And the top grossers are ...

## 'Enteng Kabisote 2,' 'Exodus' and 'Mulawin'

**By Marinel R. Cruz**

FANTASY FILM "ENTENG KABISOTE 2, OKAY Ka Fairy Ko, The Legend Continues," a co-production of OctoArts and M-Zet Films, was the over-all top grosser in the just-concluded Metro Manila Film Festival, according to MMFF executive committee member Manny Nuqui.

Nuqui did not reveal the gross earnings of the 10 entries. The festival opened on Christmas Day and ended Jan. 7. INQUIRER Entertainment obtained a report from a major distributor that shows "Enteng Kabisote 2," directed by Tony Reyes and starring Vic Sotto, made P108.37 million from tickets sales nationwide.

A far second is Imus Productions' "Tales from the Enchanted Kingdom: Exodus," with P75.64 million, the report said. "Exodus" won most of the technical awards, and was named Second Best Picture during the awards rites at Aliw Theater.

"Mulawin The Movie" placed third, said Nuqui.

The film, directed by Dominic Zapata and Mark Reyes, earned P55.76 million, according to the distributor. "Mulawin" was co-produced by GMA Films and Regal Entertainment and stars Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin.

### Poor showing

Regal Entertainment's comedy flick "Ako Legal Wife: Mano Po 4?" directed by Joel Lamangan, came in fourth with P49.76 million. It features festival Best Actress winner Zsa Zsa Padilla and Best Supporting Actress Cherrie Pie Picache.

"Shake Rattle & Roll 2K5," a horror trilogy also produced by Regal Entertainment, landed the fifth slot with P32.171 million.

The period drama "Blue Moon," again from Regal, was declared Best Picture, but the Joel Lamangan film ranked only sixth, with P15 million.

"Kutob," produced by Canary Films, is in the seventh slot. It made just P10.8 million but won the Best Director award for Joey Reyes and Best Actor for Marvin Agustin.

In eighth place is Val Iglesias' action-drama flick "Terrorist Hunter," with P1.9 million. The film, from independent producer Double Impact, has Eddie Garcia in the lead role.

AND THE/ A2-2

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3 (DOLBY) FAMILY STONE PG13
4 (DOLBY) KING KONG PG13
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2 (SDDS) KING KONG
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4 GOLD (DTS) FAMILY STONE
5 GOLD THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
6 GOLD THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
7 GOLD (DOLBY) DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 (DOLBY STEREO) DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 (DOLBY STEREO) ENTENG KABISOTE -2
10 (DOLBY) AKO LEGAL WIFE

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Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
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Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
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4 (DTS) KING KONG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
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2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
3 (DOLBY) DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)
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2 MULAWIN

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3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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2 EXODUS
3 (DTS) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 ENTENG KABISOTE-2

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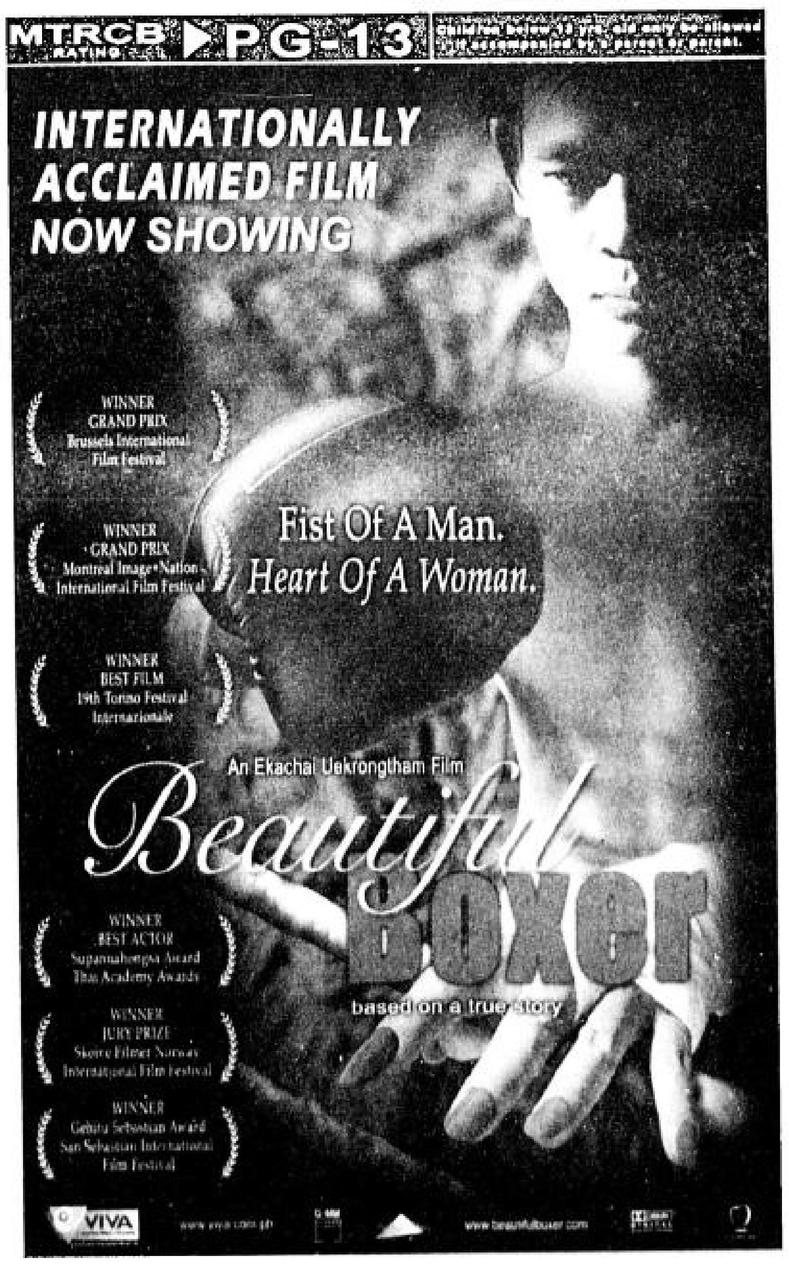
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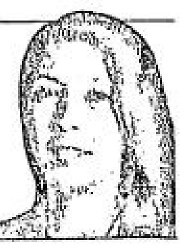
# Was that for the prize or the price?

**DOLLYWOOD**

*Dolly Ann Carvajal*



JUST ASKING:

What will happen to the movie of Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin ("I'll Always Love You") co-produced by Mother Lily now that she is at odds with Richard's mom (Annabelle Rama)? A fuming Tita Annabelle said it on nationwide TV: Richard is not shooting his remaining scenes. Maybe Richard can help soften their hearts. Or is it a case of "Mother No's Best"?

Is it true that, aside from the P1M incentive that the participating producers in the Metro Manila Film Festival received from President Gloria, they got an additional P700,000 each? Makes you wonder if they were after the prize (trophy) or the price (cash incentive)?

News about the trouble between Angel Locsin and her manager Becky Aguila leaked because of Becky's twin daughters. Becky claims she had no inkling that her kids would squeal. But she's the one who has access to media; she could have done some damage control. Or can managers turn into "damagers" sometimes?

Got a text from one of my fave writers, Jo Ann Maglipon, about her ongoing case vs Claudine Barretto: "A court-mandated mediation has been set (today) at the QC Hall. This portends to be a make-or-break meeting. The court has said that it will have the lawyers stay outside the mediation room, while Claudine, my daughter Pat and I face off. If all proceeds as planned, the day should make this case go away for good or leave us to sue each other till kingdom come." As a colleague, I stand by you Jo Ann.

### Gutierrez dynasty

The Gutierrez dynasty in show biz keeps growing. Good genes ought to be flaunted. Ritchie Paul Gutierrez, youngest child of Tita Annabelle and Eddie Gutierrez, is out to reach for his star. He is into rap music. Only 18, he knows what he wants and has the drive to achieve it. "I want to put Pinoy hip-hop on the world map."

His brother Richard is producing Ritchie Paul's debut album, "The Rise," under Iced Out Productions. It has 18 tracks which he all composed.

What can he say about other local hip-hop artists, like the Agassi brothers? Without hesitation he quips "I don't like the music of Carlos Agassi." He truly is his mother's son; he tells it like it is. And for sure his music will tell us even more about this spunky gorgeous young rap artist.

### Top-rating series

"Daisy Siete," the top-rating afternoon drama series of the hot, hot Sex Bomb Girls starts its 10th season on Jan. 16 with "Sayaw ng Puso," a musical-drama that tells of heartaches and triumphs on the dance floor. The Sexbomb Girls have danced their way into the hearts of televiewers. They have been imitated, but never equaled.

Their irrepressible manager, Joy Cancio, admits that it's tough handling the girls. "I have to discipline them. They're like my own children. If the day comes when they decide to leave the group, I won't get in the way of their dreams."

Any favorites? "I love them all but my fave is Che-Che—she gives me the least headaches."

SBG Rochelle Pangilinan is said to be the current squeeze of Kier Legaspi, who took a crash course in dancing for the show. As it turns out, they are still somewhere between friendship and love. Joy reveals, "Every time Kier's about to make a move, Rochelle reconciles with her on-and-off boyfriend of five years. Now she's contemplating on whether to go back to that boyfriend or take a chance with Kier."

### Feng shui extravaganza

Find out what the Year of the Dog holds in store at the 1st World of Feng Shui Extravaganza, at the Westin Philippine Plaza, Jan. 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feng shui master Lilian Too will conduct the seminar. Call Ticketnet, Ticketworld or Rustans.

PERSONAL Happy 18th birthday to my pride and joy, IC. What a ravishing debutante you are! *Damo gid na salamat* to my *pangga* Luke Mejares. You're the sweetest thing!

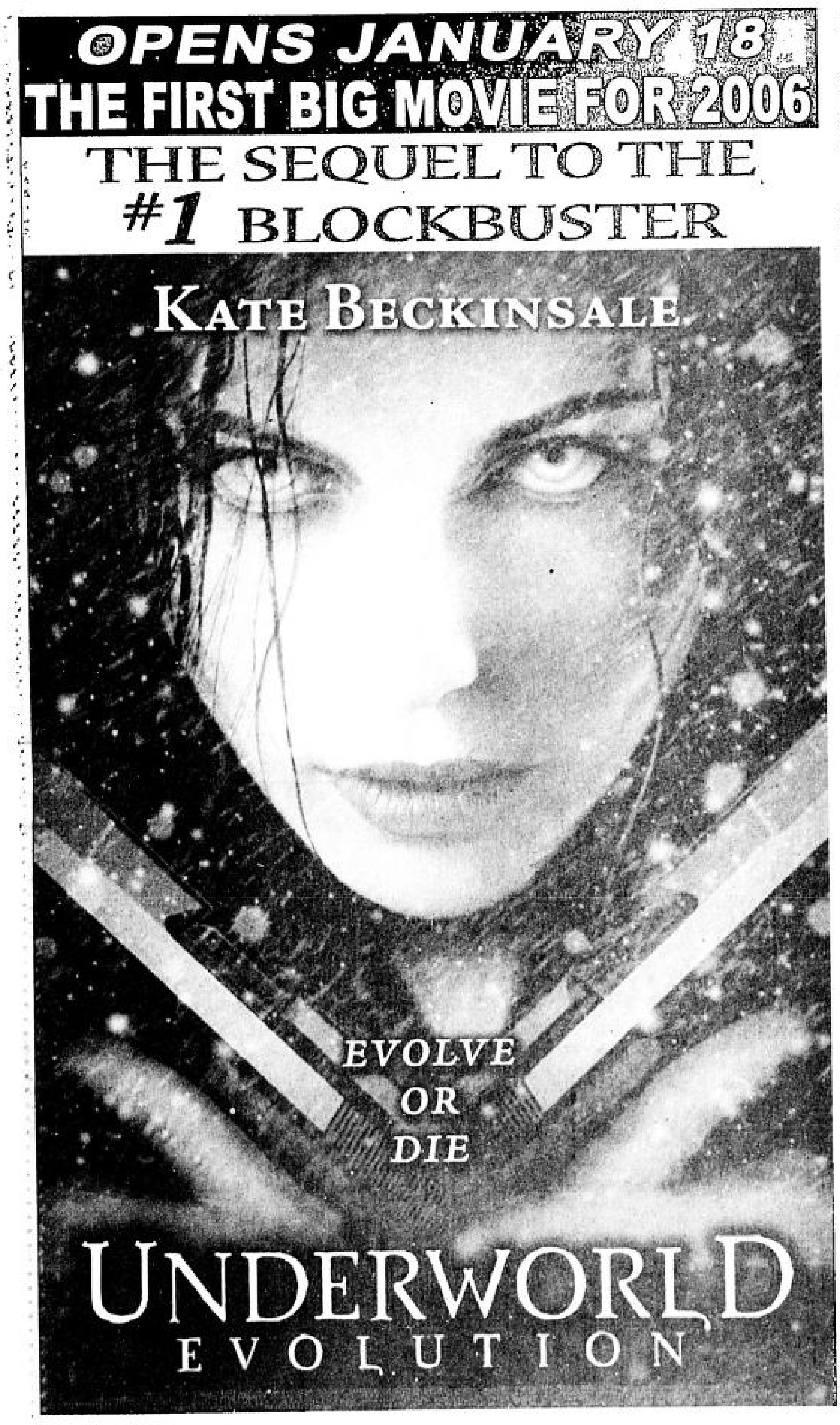
*(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)*

**THE FIL-AM 'Idol' walks down Crisologo Street.**

Pho

**JASMINE'S every song is wildly applauded.**

**WITH Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle, second from right, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Chavit Singson, right and other officials, watching a jar-maker.**



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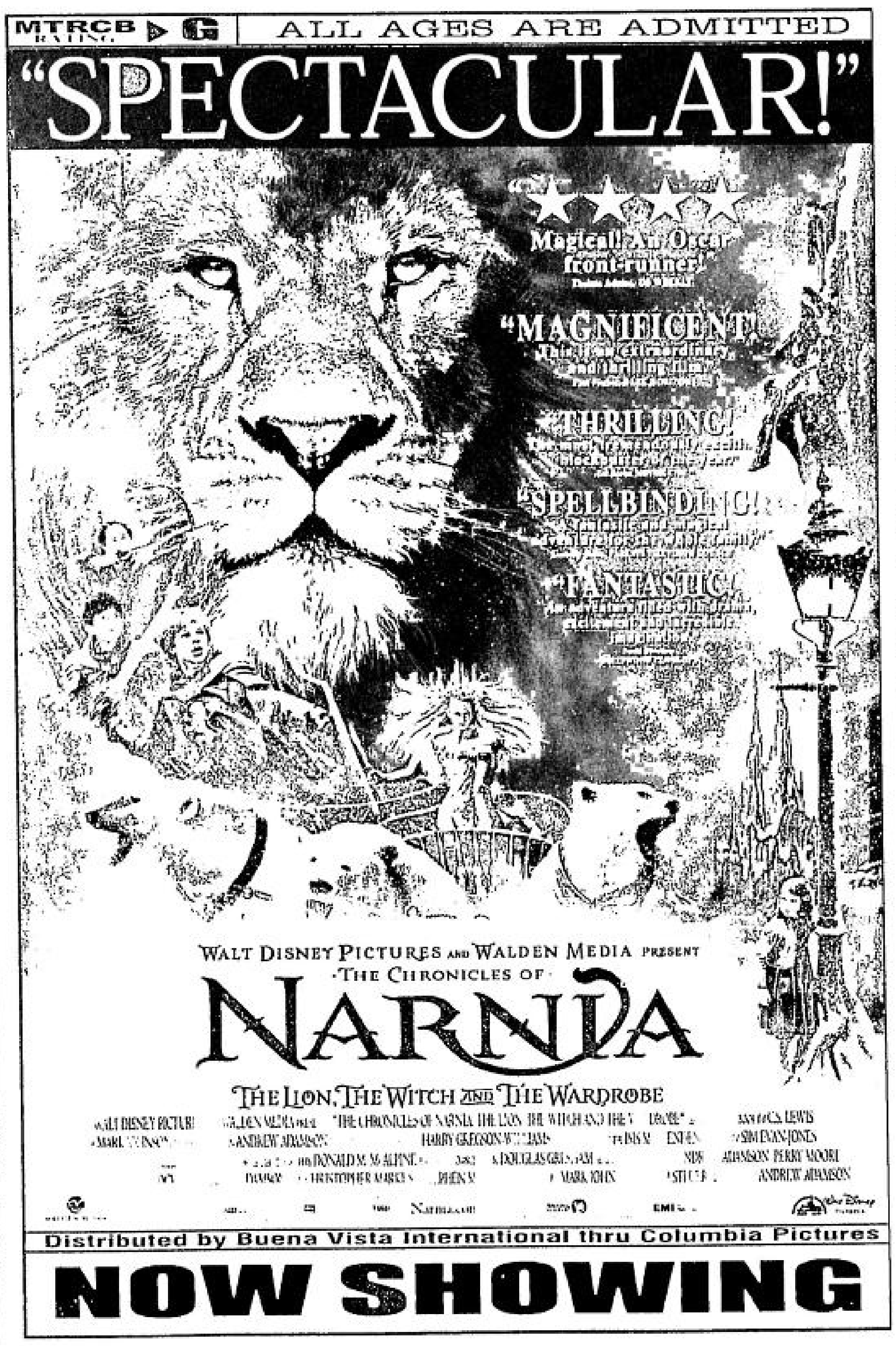

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# 'Creeping
# infects local

THESE PAST FEW MONTHS, SOME pop "composers" have been accused of plagiarizing songs. That's troubling enough, but the situation has been made even worse by some of the allegedly purloining songsmiths' breezy retort: "We didn't do it—but, even if we did, what's the big deal? Everybody copies something or other at one point in his career!"

—How cynical can you get?

VIEWP

*Nestor*

### Penchant

Others defend their penchant for musical cribbing by calling it "getting inspired" by other composers' songs, or "quoting" some musical passages as a form of "homage."

Oh, yeah? Break down all those fancy words and you still get: plagiarism.

Some music buffs have gotten their hands on the original songs, and can show, line by line, where the cribbing starts and ends.

If the "evidence" is so strong and available, how come no formal charges have been filed? Well, it turns out that, at least, once in recent years, an official complaint was made, and the offending artists or their recording company, did shell out some cash to atone for their act of musical cribbing.

Any chance of that happe again? Yes, but for that to hap the foreign artists, or their loca resentative, would first have aware of the infraction, then complaint, come up with the tailed evidence to prove the al

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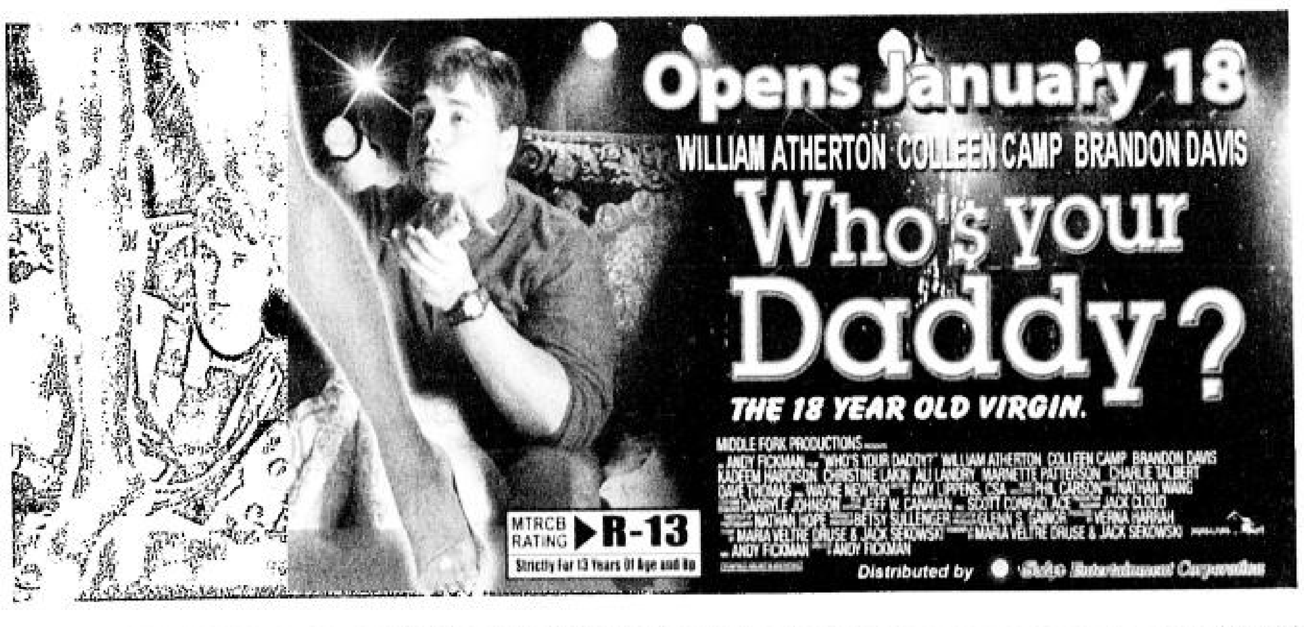

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Who's your Daddy?
THE 18 YEAR OLD VIRGIN.
MTRCB RATING R-13
Strictly For 13 Years Of Age and Up
Distributed by

# And th
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From page

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# I'm Ilocano, believe me!'

tos by Leoncio Balbin Jr.

VIGAN CITY—"AMERICAN IDOL" 2004 runner-up Jasmine Trias had a hard time convincing her audience that she is Ilocano, just like them.

This, although they had come in droves to Plaza Burgos on Sunday evening, patiently waited for her to come out onstage, and then wildly cheered and applauded her.

"You don't believe me? I am Ilocano, I really am," she said a few minutes into the show. The crowd went quiet. "My mother is from Zambales. She's a Soriano!"

The cheering resumed, and it was back to serious partying in this old city with hardly a nightlife to speak of.

Trias' performance was the highlight of a five-city tour commemorating the centennial of the arrival of Filipino workers in Hawaii. She joined Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle and about 200 Hawaiian dignitaries and *balikbayans* (returning Filipinos) on a visit of Manila, Makati and Vigan. The group is proceeding to Dagupan and Cebu.

Lingle cited Trias, baseball star Benny Agbayani and World Boxing Council light flyweight champion Brian Viloria as the epitome of the new Filipino-Americans in Hawaii.

"It was great. I had a great time," Trias said after the show. "I am going to take this one back with me." *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

# cynicism'
# music scene

tion, and stay the legal course until a confirming verdict shall have been proclaimed. Will all of that happen soon in these notoriously non-litigious Philippines? Well, we wouldn't stay up all night to find out...

INDER

*Torre*

## Virus

What we *would* like to see less off is the virus of "creeping cynicism" that's infecting the local pop music scene, of which acts of plagiarism are only some of the disturbing symptoms.

Other unfortunate manifestations are: Recording companies coming up with albums featuring popular stars who can't sing to save their lives; endless revivals instead of original compositions; veteran singers who keep performing despite the embarrassing fact that their voices have gone bad, and new talents copying established performers' singing styles.

We all need to remind ourselves that artists are supposed to be creative, *not* larcenous or lazy. That they need to be innovative, and to continue developing their talent, instead of coasting along on sheer reputation *and* repetition. And that each artist should have his own voice, because art is supposed to be personal and unique.

Industry veterans will scoff: "Hey, all we want to do is entertain, give the people what we think they want, and make money." Fair enough. —And, yet another example of the cynical attitude we're been deploring.

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|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | KINGKONG | 11:30, 3:10, 6:50, 10:30 | PG-13 |
| 2 | CHRONICLES OF NARNIA | 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30 | GP |
| 3 | CHRONICLES OF NARNIA | 11:00, 2:10, 5:10, 8:10, 11:00 | GP |
| 4 | FAMILY STONE | 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 | PG-13 |

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|---|---|---|
| FAMILY STONE<br>PG13<br>12:30,2:55,5:20,<br>7:45,10:10 | CHRONICLES OF NARNIA<br>GP<br>1:10,4:10,7:10,10:10 | CHRONICLES OF NARNIA<br>GP<br>12:00,3:00,6:00,9:00 |
| DON'T GIVE UP ON US<br>PG13<br>12:20,2:45,5:10,<br>7:35,10:00 | KING KONG<br>PG13<br>2:40,6:20,10:00 | CHRONICLES OF NARNIA<br>GP<br>2:00,5:00 |

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HANG CINEPLE
① CHRONICLES OF NARNIA MTRCB GP
12 30, 3 20, 6 10, 9.00PM
② CHRONICLES OF NARNIA MTRCB GP
1 50, 4 40, 7 30, 10 20 LMF
③ FAMILY STONE MTRCB PG-13
12.00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10.00
④ KING KONG MTRCB PG-13
11 00, 2 40, 6 20, 10 00 LMF
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CINEMA 3 FAMILY STONE PG13 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
CINEMA 4 NARNIA GP 11:15, 2:10, 5:05, 8:00, 10:50
CINEMA 5 NARNIA GP 10:30, 1:20, 4:15, 7:10, 10:05
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| AKO, LEGAL WIFE<br>1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40 | FAMILY STONE<br>12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40 | NARNIA<br>11:50 / 1:10 / 2:40 / 4:00<br>5:30 / 6:50 / 8:20 / 9:40 | NARNIA<br>12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00 |
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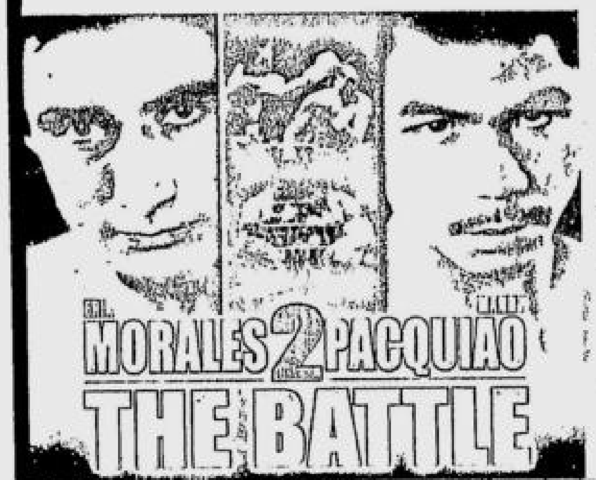

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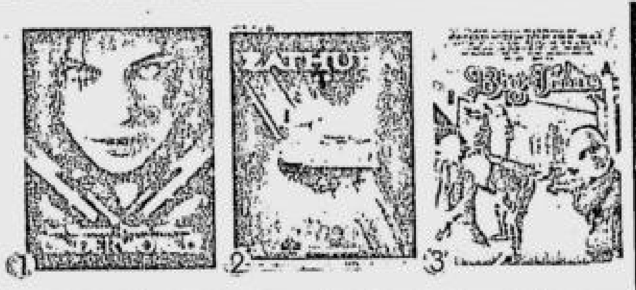

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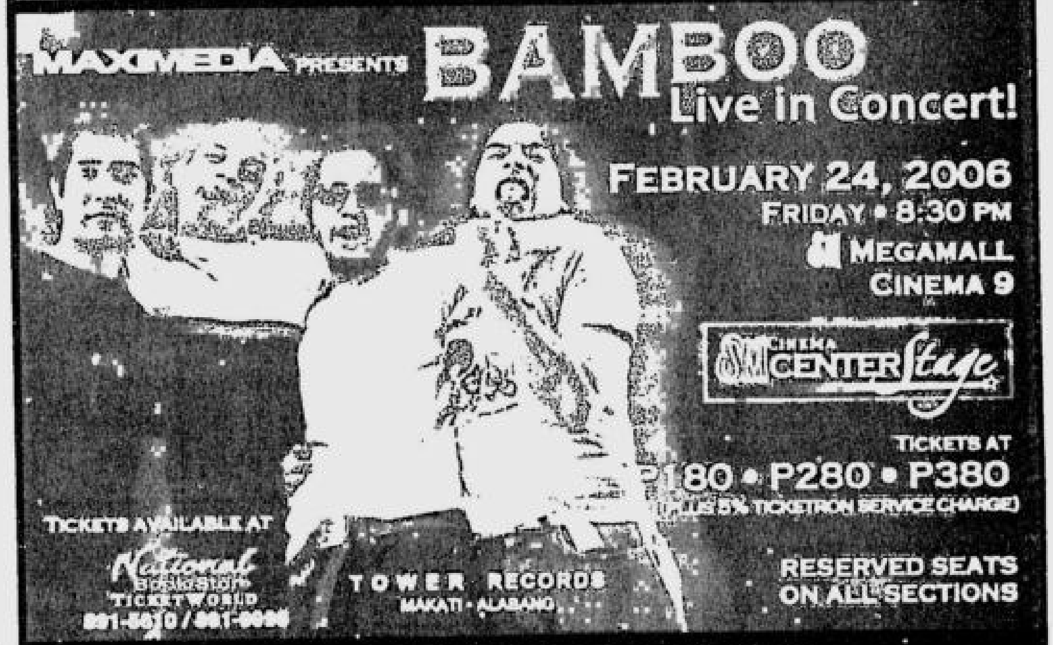

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09 20LFS 09 40LMF 12 50END
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KING KONG
10:50FS/11 00MF 02:30 06:00
09:10LFS 09:30LMF/12.35END
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
11.00FS 11.30MF 01.45 04:20 06.55
09:15LFS 09:30LMF/11:50END
BLUE MOON
11:20FS/11:30MF 01.30 03:30 05:30 09:30
09:15LFS 09.30LMF/11:15END

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BEAUTIFUL BOXER
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
FAMILY STONE
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
ST. ANGE
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
1 EXODUS
BLUE MOON
SM CITY STA. MESA
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 KING KONG
BLUE MOON
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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FAMILY STONE
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SM CITY BAGUIO
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4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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4 KING KONG
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THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
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SM CITY LUCENA
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THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
EXODUS

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SM CITY CEBU
KING KONG
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
BLUE MOON
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MULAWIN THE MOVIE
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY DAVAO
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
KING KONG
AKO LEGAL WIFE
EXODUS
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
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2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

3 The Chronicles of NARNIA
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

4 THE FAMILY STONE
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

6 KING KONG
11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00

7 BEAUTIFUL BOXER

8 ENTENG KABISOTE
EXODUS

9 SAINT. ANGE
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

10 AKO LEGAL WIFE 12:20 2:45
BLUE MOON 5:10 7:35 10:00

## ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA 11:30 2:05 4:40 7:15 9:50

2 AKO LEGAL WIFE 12:00 2:00 4:00
BLUE MOON 6:15 8:05 10:00

3 THE FAMILY STONE
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4 BEAUTIFUL BOXER

5 KING KONG
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6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

7 SAINT. ANGE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

## METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12:10 2 30 4.50 7:10 9:20

2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:15

4 KING KONG
1:35 5:10 9.00

5 SAINT. ANGE
12 50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 BLUE MOON
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

7 The Chronicles of NARNIA
11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00

8 THE FAMILY STONE
1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

## NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 BLUE MOON
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 EXODUS
5 KING KONG
6 The Chronicles of NARNIA
7 THE FAMILY STONE
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

## CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MULAWIN
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 RESERVE
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## PIONEER 687-5378

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 SAINT ANGE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 THE FAMILY STONE

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Cinema 7 THE FAMILY STONE
Cinema 8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

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2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 BLUE MOON
4 KING KONG
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

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3 KING KONG
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4 The Chronicles of NARNIA
5 The Chronicles of NARNIA

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2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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4 ST. ANGE

**G4** GLORIETTA 4
1 FAMILY STONE
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SE
4 KING KONG
5 THE BEAUTIFUL BOXER
6 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE

**GB1** GREENBELT 1
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

**GB3** GREENBELT 3
1 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SEATS
2 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SE
3 KING KONG GUARANTEED SEATS
4 FAMILY STONE GUARANTEED SEATS
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US GUARANTEED SE

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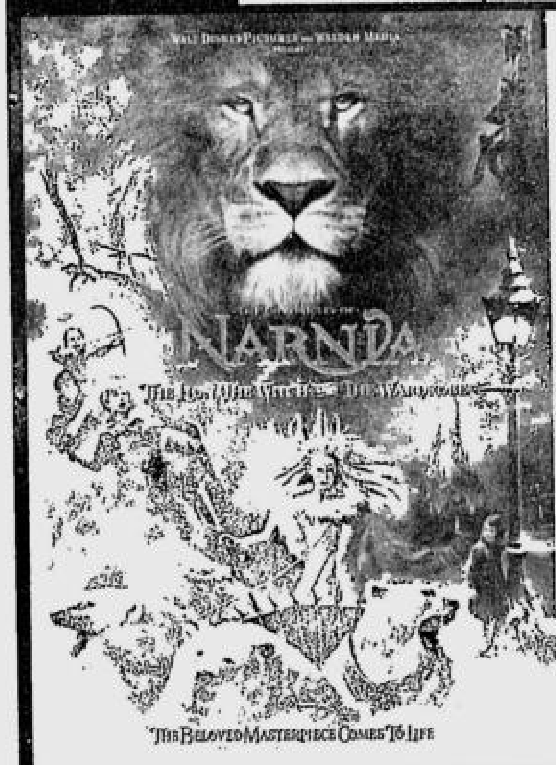
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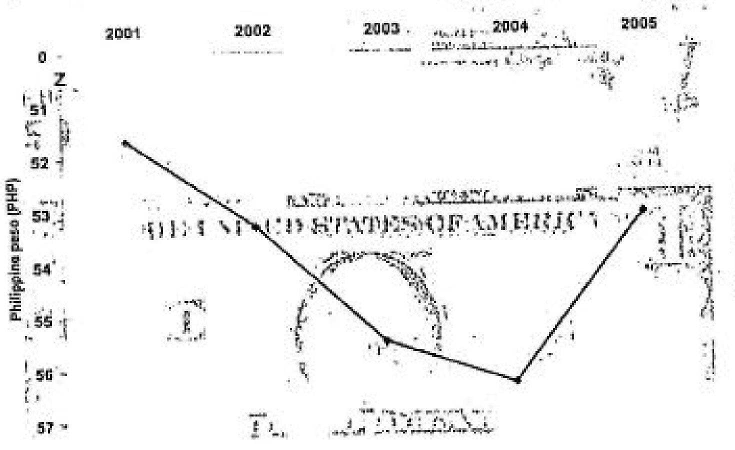
# Foreign investments surged 64% to $863M

## INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

**Peso-US dollar exchange rate**
(Yearly averages, 2001-2005)



*Sources: Technistock and PDI reports*

*THE 2005 average peso-US dollar rate of 53.09 was the strongest since P51.67 in 2001. The peso had hit record lows in 2004, when it closed at P56.45 on Sept. 27 and Oct. 13. However, on the first trading day of 2006, the peso closed at P52.835—the first time it broke into the P52:$1 level since May 2003—due to remittances from overseas Filipino workers.*

*Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research*

## 10-month inflow benefits manufacturing, real estate

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

FRESH FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES surged by 64.4 percent to a net $863 million from January to October 2005 from a year ago, mostly benefiting manufacturing and real estate businesses.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said that for the month of October alone, FDI flows doubled to $102 million from a year ago due to inflows to the "other capital" component, comprising of inter-company accounts between investee companies and their foreign principals.

As opposed to portfolio inflows, which are also called as "hot money" due to their volatile nature, FDI flows represent long-term investments in businesses that are usually capital- and labor-intensive such as those spent in building new factories, power plants, mining ventures or other enterprises.

During the 10-month period, Tetangco said higher net FDI flows were in the form of net equity capital, which rose by 40.2 percent to $959 million as fresh equity placements offset withdrawals.

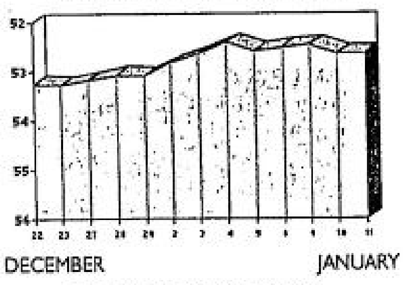
The FDI record was based on the country's balance of payments as tabulated by the BSP, measuring actual flows that came in during the period, as opposed to mere investment pledges monitored by the Board of Investments.

Placements of new equity capital totaled $1.1

FOREIGN/ B2

## INDICATORS

### CURRENCIES



**PESO-DOLLAR RATE**

P 52.645 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 10, 2006

¥ 114.74 = $ 1

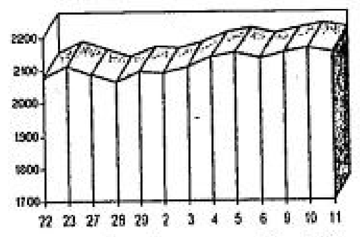
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 10, 2006

GOLD: $540.10-540.60

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 10, 2006

### STOCK MARKET

**PSE COMPOSITE INDEX**



(See stock market report on Page B2)

### Share prices close 0.54% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.54 percent lower yesterday as investors took profits on recent gains that took the market to its highest level in 10 months, dealers said.

They said support for PLDT and Equitable PCI Bank limited the downside.

The composite index lost 11.72 points or 0.54 percent at 2,150.71, after trading between 2,137.37 and 2,162.43. Volume was 640.41 million shares worth P1.26 billion.

The broader all-shares index rose 1.36 points to 1,020.70.

AFP

## Meralco, Napocor reach supply deal

**By Abigail L. Ho**

AFTER MONTHS OF DISPUTE, THE TRANSITION supply contract (TSC) between the state-owned National Power Corp. and the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. will finally take effect at midnight on Jan. 25 or the February billing month.

An Energy Regulatory Commission order states that the TSC will "terminate upon commercial operation of the (wholesale electricity spot market)."

To prevent any confusion and dispute when their TSC ceases to take effect, the regu-

MERALCO/ B2

### 13.3% IN 2005

## Gov't tax effort improves

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE PHILIPPINES REGISTERED LAST year its first tax-effort growth since the 1997 Asian financial crisis following fiscal reforms undertaken to shore up weak revenues of the national government.

The Department of Finance said the tax effort hit 13.3 percent in the 11 months to November last year, and was likely to have remained at the same figure, if not having slightly improved, as of December.

The tax effort, a measure of the government's efficiency in collecting taxes, is the ratio between revenue collections by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and other offices, and the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

"We have finally reversed the declining trend. This is largely a result of administrative measures to improve revenue collection," said Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran.

The expected 13.3-percent tax effort in 2005 was 0.7 percentage point better than the 12.6 percent recorded in 2004. The official tax-effort target for 2005 was also 13.3 percent, which means the government met its 2005 goal.

After hitting a record high of 17 percent in 1997, the country's tax effort had been on a decline, reaching 15.6 percent in 1998, 14.5 percent in 1999, 13.7 percent in 2000, 13.5 percent in 2001, 12.8 percent in 2002 and 2003.

The faltering tax effort was partly blamed on the crisis that started in 1997 that adversely affected income of various industries, thus reducing the government's tax-collection base.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier said the DOF was targeting to again achieve the 17-percent tax effort

GOV'T/ B2

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# Europe cornering RP coconut oil

## November exports to EU equivalent to 83% of total

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**

EUROPE IS GETTING A BIGGER SHARE OF coconut oil exports from the Philippines with 82.9 percent or 97,091 metric tons of total shipments going to the region last November, according to an industry umbrella group.

In terms of value, total November earnings (excluding sales of oleochemicals) was estimated at $70 million, $6 million or 5.6-percent less than $74.8 million posted the previous year, which the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines attributed to lower market prices.

Coconut oil makes up the bulk of the total coconut products shipped out of the country, accounting for 53.4 percent of total volume of coconut-based products exported from January to November.

Ucap reported that the November shipments represented a significant growth from October's 55,209 MT.

The United States imported 10,500 MT of coconut oil from the country or 9 percent of total sales.

The remaining 8.1 percent was sent to Korea, Japan and Malaysia, which bought 4,200 MT; 3,375 MT; and 2,000 MT respectively.

Also, Ucap said the volume of coconut exports went up about 9 percent to about 1.83 million MT in the 11 months up to November.

Data from the group showed that exports from January to November grew from about 1.68 million MT in copra terms posted in the same period of 2004.

Up to the end of November, exporters shipped out 980,487 MT of coconut oil; 376,076 MT of copra meal; 108,182 MT of dessicated coconut; and 111,892 MT copra equivalent of oleochemicals.

The numbers mean that in the period reported, shipments of coconut oil grew by 8.4 percent; of copra meal by about 13 percent; of desiccated coconut and of oleochemicals by 12.5 percent.

"The growth was exclusively on account of coconut oil, which was a growth performer during the month along with copra meal," Ucap said.

Further Ucap said that in November, overall coconut exports increased 8.2 percent to 205,083 MT in copra terms from 189,579 MT in the same month last year.

Coconut oil exports increased in November by 18.6 percent to 117,172 MT from 98,783 MT while with copra meal volumes went up by 33.9 percent to 42,784 MT from 31,943 MT.

On the other hand, volumes of desiccated coconut and oleochemicals shrank by 38.5 percent and 46.1 percent, respectively.

Exporters sold 7,478 MT of dessicated coconut from the year-ago figure of 12,162 MT. Shipments of oleochemicals was pegged at 7,534 MT compared to 13,977 MT in November 2004.

# Pension show

**BREAKTIME**

*Conrado R. Banal III*

EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE PENSION FUNDS, the SSS and the GSIS, are again in big trouble with their pet charity—meaning, their losing investments in the tricky Equitable PCI Bank.

In a show of investment passion years ago, the pension funds put almost P20 billion in the bank, with nothing to show for it now!

As most of the clueless 28 million SSS and GSIS members do not know, their pension funds are now caught in another passionate battle with another group of stockholders in the bank.

And that is the group of mall magnate Henry Sy, starring his daughter Tessie Sy, who sits in the Equitable PCI board and heads its powerful executive committee.

Let us say that, for some ungodly reasons, such as through the "intercession" of somebody big at the Palace, the SSS and the GSIS lose in this epic battle for control of the troubled Equitable PCI.

What can happen to the pension funds?

I hate to break it to you, my barbecue, but I think that the SSS and the GSIS can kiss their multibillion-peso investments in the bank goodbye.

They are locked in the bank for good, without hope of ever getting out their money back.

Uh-oh, those investments only happen to be YOUR money actually.

***

AFTER acquiring a minority position in Equitable PCI only some months ago, the Henry Sy group is now pushing hard for its merger with Banco de Oro or BDO.

Well, the group owns BDO. It also controls the majority interest in Chinabank.

Why the group will not merge those two banks instead, both of which it controls anyway, and why it must insists on BDO's absorbing the much bigger Equitable PCI, is the biggest mystery in banking these days.

My guess is, well, if the SM group of Henry Sy succeeds in merging Equitable PCI with BDO, it will catapult BDO into the country's third largest bank.

Without having to spend a single centavo to buy out the majority stockholders of Equitable PCI at that!

That's why I'm afraid that if the SM-initiated merger pushes through, the SSS and GSIS members—all 28 million or so of them—cannot ever hope to get out of the troubled bank anymore and, thus, recover their investments.

***

YOU see, the merger will mean that the SSS and the GSIS will lose their bargaining power when they finally—FINALLY—try to sell their Equitable PCI investments.

And that, mind you, is the intention. The SSS and the GSIS will have to eventually unload their shares in the bank. Their members have more use for the cash. Duh!

Now, together with the sequestered shares in the bank of the Romualdez family, the pension funds today have majority control of the bank.

(That, in fact, is the reason they were able to force the Go family out of the bank, who controlled it despite being the minority shareholders.)

If I remember my music lessons correctly, "majority control" means that the seller can actually ask for a premium price for any investment.

But what happens if the BDO absorbs Equitable PCI—what will become of the GSIS and the SSS?

Their investments in Equitable PCI will be diluted in the surviving bank BDO, that's what will happen. They will lose their bargaining chip.

If the SSS and GSIS holdings in the bank become negligible, say, at 10 percent, nobody in his right mind will want to acquire their investments ever.

In short, the SSS and GSIS members again aare f…ed!

***

DURING the recent fight for control of the Equitable PCI with the Go family, the SSS-GSIS-Romualdez group was hoping that a moneyed group (i.e. the Henry Sy group) would buy out the Go family.

It seemed that the SSS and the GSIS were hoping also to sell their investments in the bank to the Henry Sy group—at a good price, of course!

Thus, for the 28 million or so SSS and GSIS members, the merger plan of the Henry Sy group again yields nothing but dashed hopes.

It is a case of the mouse swallowing the cat, as GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia loves to say, because the stockholders of Equitable PCI will actually lose in the merger.

Under the merger plan, for every 100 shares in Equitable PCI, the SSS and the GSIS will get 160 shares.

In effect, the shares of Equitable PCI bank will be valued at about P50 each, versus the present market price of P62 a share.

Interestingly, word in the market is that somebody is trying to bring down the price of Equitable PCI shares.

Luckily, another moneyed group (most probably the GSIS) is trying to prop it up by buying.

Meanwhile, the price of Banco de Oro shares is going up.

And that's good for the merger design of the Henry Sy group.

# Gov't tax effort improves

From page B1

over the medium term through the implementation of all major fiscal reforms being pushed by the Arroyo administration.

Enhancements in the system of tax collection included the use of third-party sources, such as clients of large taxpayers, in determining the accuracy of the tax remittances of companies. The BIR has also started adopting the benchmarking method in assessing whether a firm's income declaration and tax remittances were accurate.

Under the benchmarking method, the BIR comes up with an industry benchmark in terms of revenue generation, and uses it as a guide in determining the accuracy of income tax declarations by corporate taxpayers.

It may be noted, however, that although the BIR's tax collection last year reflected a year-on-year growth, it still fell short of the official target. Preliminary estimates showed that the BIR could have missed its collection target for 2005 by P9 billion to P15 billion. The BIR was tasked to collect P546.7 billion last year.

The BOC surpassed its P151.2-billion target last year by P2 billion only if its non-cash revenue collections were included. Last year's non-cash collections of the BOC, which authorities are still studying whether to consider or not, amounted to about P12 billion.

"They have done well in terms of historical performance, but the improvement is still incomplete because they have to meet their targets," Teves said.

KING JAMES AUCTION CALENDAR
PULILAN AUCTION
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SITE LOCATION: 333 OLD NATIONAL HIGHWAY, STO. CRISTO, PULILAN, BULACAN
AUCTION DATE: JANUARY 15, 2006 (SUN), 10:30AM
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# Foreign . . .

From page B1

billion, channeled mainly to manufacturing ($503 million); real estate ($100 million) and services ($16 million). Most investors came from the United States and Hong Kong.

Also contributing to the favorable FDI performance during the 10-month period was the decline in the total net outflow in the "other capital" component of FDI to $102 million from the year-ago level of $291 million, Tetangco said.

"For the full year 2005, total net FDI flows are projected to reach $971 million with the expected equity capital placements in Philippine enterprises amounting to $1.4 billion," Tetangco said.

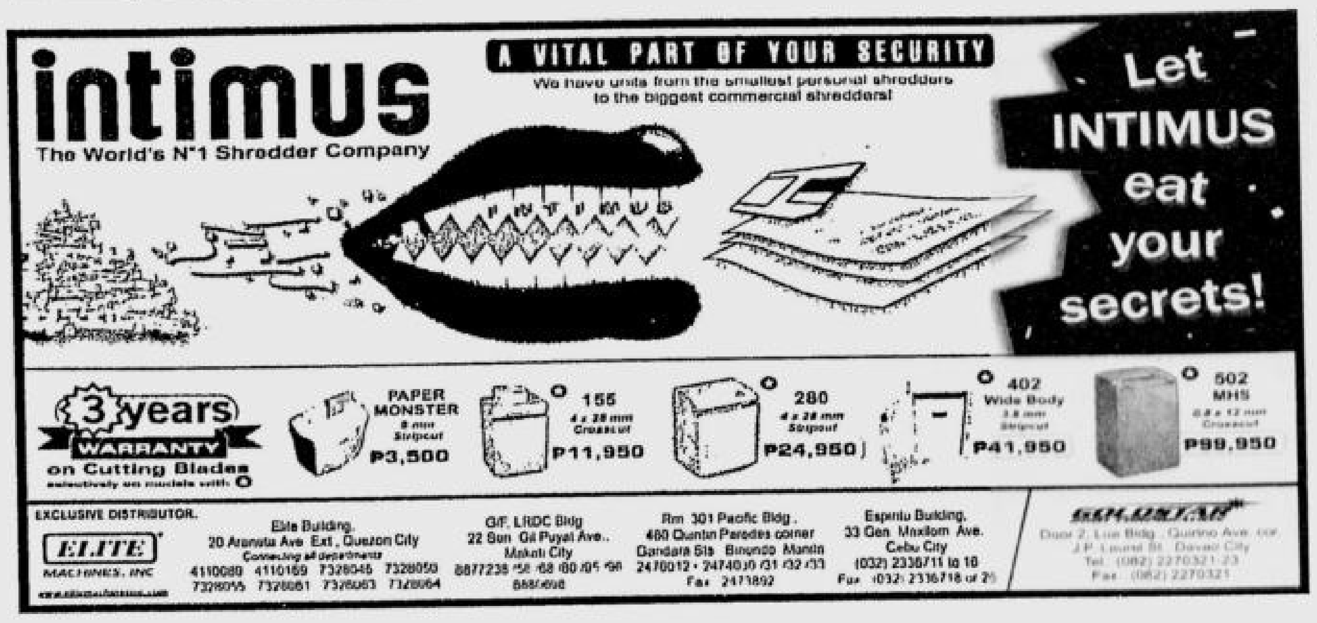
For this year, the BSP expects net FDI flows to the Philippines reaching $940 million, matching the strong performance seen in 2005.

The FDIs this year are expected to benefit the power, manufacturing and telecommunication sectors as foreign firms jumpstart or beef up foreign investments in local enterprises.

The expected privatization of power generating plants owned by the government as well as the Supreme Court's ruling that favored the entry of foreign investors in the mining sector were seen as catalysts in attracting more foreign investments.

Business process outsourcing is likewise a booming industry in the Philippines, with big multinational corporations shifting some of their backroom operations such as call center requirements to the country to take advantage of its English-speaking workforce.

However, there also are some outflows expected from the offshore expansion plans of Philippine companies like food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.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## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 11, 2006)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FINANCIAL** | | | | | |
| **BANKS** | | | | | |
| Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc. | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 15,000 |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 36 | 36 | 35.5 | 36 | 118,400 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 56 | 56 | 55.5 | 56 | 714,900 |
| China Banking Corp. | 605 | 610 | 605 | 610 | 3,790 |
| Citystate Savings Bank | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 300 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 62.5 | 63 | 62.5 | 63 | 1,315,200 |
| International Exch. Bank | 20.5 | 20.5 | 20.5 | 20.5 | 80,000 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 33.5 | 33.5 | 33 | 33.5 | 576,500 |
| Philippine National Bank | 32 | 32.5 | 32 | 32 | 155,900 |
| Rizal Comm. Banking Corp. | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 2,000 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 35.5 | 35.5 | 35 | 35.5 | 171,200 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 31.5 | 31.5 | 31 | 31 | 13,200 |
| **OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTION** | | | | | |
| First Metro Invest. Corp. | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 10,200 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 3170 | 3170 | 3170 | 3170 | 1,400 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc. | 2120 | 2130 | 2120 | 2130 | 220 |
| Ivantage Corp. | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 810,000 |
| **INDUSTRIAL** | | | | | |
| **ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER** | | | | | |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp. | 52.5 | 52.5 | 52 | 52.5 | 697,500 |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 1,600 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 22 | 22 | 21.5 | 22 | 595,300 |
| Manila Water Co. Inc. | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 6,523,000 |
| Petron Corp. | 4.9 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 3,001,000 |
| East Asia Power Res. Corp. | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 220,000 |
| Trans-Asia Oil and Energy | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 300,000 |
| **FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO** | | | | | |
| Alaska Milk Corp. | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 30,000 |
| Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 10,000 |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 39.5 | 39.5 | 39.5 | 39.5 | 180,100 |
| Pancake House Inc. | 3.65 | 3.65 | 3.65 | 3.65 | 3,000 |
| Roxas Holdings Inc. | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.38 | 64,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 64 | 64.5 | 64 | 64.5 | 38,600 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 88 | 88 | 88 | 88 | 165,600 |
| Universal Robina Corp. | 20 | 20 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 95,600 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 300,000 |
| **CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.33 | 0.34 | 0.33 | 0.34 | 550,000 |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 0.76 | 0.77 | 0.76 | 0.77 | 1,720,000 |
| Fortune Cement Corp. | 0.82 | 0.82 | 0.82 | 0.82 | 50,000 |
| Holcim Philippines Inc. | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 2,045,000 |
| **CHEMICALS** | | | | | |
| Pryce Corp. | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 1,000,000 |
| **DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS** | | | | | |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 100,000 |
| **HOLDING FIRMS** | | | | | |
| Abacus Con Res & Hdg A | 0.0065 | 0.007 | 0.0065 | 0.007 | 153,000,000 |
| Atok-Big Wedge. Inc. B | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 3,000 |
| Ayala Corp. | 340 | 342.5 | 337.5 | 340 | 218,870 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 4.9 | 4.9 | 4.85 | 4.85 | 85,000 |
| Ajo.Net Holdings Inc | 0.024 | 0.024 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 4,300,000 |
| A. Soriano Corp. | 2.14 | 2.16 | 2.14 | 2.16 | 1,958,000 |
| APC Group Inc. | 0.215 | 0.22 | 0.215 | 0.22 | 860,000 |
| Alcorn Gold Res. Corp. | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 47,000,000 |
| Anglo Phil Holdings Corp. | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 10,000 |
| ATN Holdings Inc. | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.22 | 40,000 |
| Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc. | 9.1 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 10,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.18 | 1.2 | 5,020,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.35 | 3.35 | 1,412,000 |
| Filinvest Dev. Corp. | 1.24 | 1.24 | 1.22 | 1.22 | 24,000 |
| J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc. | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.7 | 3.75 | 581,000 |
| Prime Orion Phils. Inc. | 0.215 | 0.245 | 0.21 | 0.235 | 10,980,000 |
| Solid Group Inc | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 40,000 |
| Sinophil Corp. | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 80,000 |
| SM Investments Corp. | 241 | 241 | 239 | 240 | 472,710 |
| South China Resources Inc. | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 50,000 |
| Unioil Res. & Holdings Co | 0.065 | 0.065 | 0.065 | 0.065 | 500,000 |
| **PROPERTY** | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10 | 10.25 | 11,947,600 |
| Belle Corp. | 1.04 | 1.06 | 1.02 | 1.04 | 2,157,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 300,000 |
| Cebu Holdings Inc. | 1.12 | 1.12 | 1.12 | 1.12 | 137,000 |
| C&P Homes Inc. | 1.96 | 1.96 | 1.94 | 1.94 | 164,000 |
| Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.225 | 0.225 | 1,470,000 |
| EIB Realty Developers Inc. | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 230,000 |
| Empire East Land Inc. | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 8,950,000 |
| Ever-Gotesco Resources | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 1,300,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.52 | 1.54 | 1.5 | 1.54 | 7,641,000 |
| Interport Res. B | 0.0036 | 0.0036 | 0.0036 | 0.0036 | 1,000,000 |
| Kuok Phil. Properties | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 700,000 |
| Marsteel Cons. Inc. A | 0.016 | 0.016 | 0.016 | 0.016 | 400,000 |
| Megaworld Corp. | 1.38 | 1.4 | 1.36 | 1.38 | 7,815,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.36 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 13,450,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 13,290,000 |
| Uniwide Holdings Inc | 0.13 | 0.13 | 0.125 | 0.125 | 970,000 |
| **SERVICE** | | | | | |
| **MEDIA** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 42,000 |
| **TELECOMMUNICATIONS** | | | | | |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc. | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.92 | 0.94 | 1,390,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 770 | 770 | 760 | 770 | 57,390 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 3.55 | 3.6 | 3.55 | 3.55 | 3,139,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 1845 | 1855 | 1840 | 1855 | 167,950 |
| **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY** | | | | | |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 100,000 |
| Imperial Res. | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 2,000,000 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.014 | 0.015 | 0.014 | 0.015 | 16,900,000 |
| **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Asian Terminals Inc. | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1,000 |
| Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp. | 1.66 | 1.66 | 1.66 | 1.66 | 97,000 |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 10 | 10 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 255,500 |
| Lorenzo Shipping Corp. | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 51,000 |
| **HOTEL & LEISURE** | | | | | |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 1.48 | 1.48 | 1.48 | 1.48 | 137,000 |
| Manila Jockey Club | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 100,000 |
| Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 360,000 |
| **EDUCATION** | | | | | |
| Centro Escolar University | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 5,000 |
| Ipeople Inc. | 3.05 | 3.1 | 3.05 | 3.1 | 35,000 |
| **DIVERSIFIED SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Macroasia Corp. | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.38 | 42,000 |
| Paxys Inc. | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 3,021,000 |
| **MINING & OIL** | | | | | |
| **MINING** | | | | | |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. A | 1.1 | 1.18 | 1.1 | 1.18 | 3,899,000 |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. B | 1.18 | 1.32 | 1.16 | 1.3 | 3,586,000 |
| Abra Mining & Industrial | 0.0065 | 0.007 | 0.0065 | 0.007 | 9,000,000 |
| Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't | 5.8 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 208,000 |
| Benguet Corp. A | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 20,000 |
| Dizon Copper Silver Mines | 1.58 | 1.62 | 1.58 | 1.62 | 255,000 |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.235 | 0.235 | 0.23 | 0.235 | 36,770,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B | 0.28 | 0.29 | 0.27 | 0.29 | 56,490,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.019 | 0.019 | 0.019 | 0.019 | 62,300,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.029 | 0.029 | 0.028 | 0.029 | 58,800,000 |
| Omico Corp. | 0.0055 | 0.0055 | 0.0055 | 0.0055 | 30,000,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. A | 1.44 | 1.48 | 1.4 | 1.48 | 5,674,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. B | 2 | 2.1 | 1.96 | 2.1 | 13,619,000 |
| Semirara Mining Corp. | 27 | 27 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 555,600 |
| United Paragon Mining Co. | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 780,000 |
| Vulcan Ind'l | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 40,000 |
| **OIL** | | | | | |
| Basic Consolidated Inc. | 0.185 | 0.185 | 0.185 | 0.185 | 120,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 8,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 1,000,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. A | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.34 | 0.35 | 220,000 |
| **PREFERRED** | | | | | |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series K | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series L | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 400 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series P | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series S | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series V | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 700 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series W | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 2,400 |
| pldt 10% Pref Series Aa | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 2,000 |
| **WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr) | 13 | 13 | 12.75 | 12.75 | 303,800 |

## CURRENCIES

January 11, 2006

| Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.828569 | 1.000000 | 52.5490 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007250 | 0.008750 | 0.4598 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.462922 | 1.765600 | 92.7805 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.106899 | 0.129017 | 6.7797 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.647269 | 0.781189 | 41.0507 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.710974 | 0.858074 | 45.0909 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.507204 | 0.612145 | 32.1676 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.621023 | 0.749513 | 39.3862 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 2.197854 | 2.652590 | 139.3910 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.220940 | 0.266652 | 14.0123 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.505657 | 0.610277 | 32.0694 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000088 | 0.000106 | 0.0056 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.020824 | 0.025132 | 1.3207 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.225590 | 0.272264 | 14.3072 |
| Euro | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.206900 | 63.4214 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.270686 | 0.326691 | 17.1673 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.367030 | 0.442968 | 23.2775 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134111 | 0.161859 | 8.5055 |
| India | Rupee | 0.018771 | 0.022655 | 1.1905 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.221040 | 0.266773 | 14.0187 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.077955 | 0.094084 | 4.9440 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.574358 | 0.693193 | 36.4266 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.135536 | 0.163578 | 8.5959 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000844 | 0.001019 | 0.0535 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.025912 | 0.031273 | 1.6434 |

# Meralco, Napocor . . .

From page B1

latory body requires Napocor and Meralco to submit for approval a bilateral supply contract within 30 days before the termination of their TSC.

This, the ERC said in its order, would be pursuant to another order requiring all distribution utilities to enter into future bilateral supply contracts with power producers.

The ERC order further clarifies that Meralco's nomination of its two- or three-year energy level as its system demand should not be taken as the power distributor's actual contracted level as these are only indicative and are set for power planning purposes only.

"There being no contracted level, as the dynamics of the Economic Dispatch Protocol varies periodically and (is) without long-term predictability, the minimum and premium charges shall not apply," the order explains.

Having issued these clarifications, the ERC now orders Napocor, together with the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), and Meralco to submit their duly executed agreement by Jan. 20.

## 3G FREQUENCY ASSIGNMENTS

# Bayantel seeks reconsideration of NTC decision

By Clarissa S. Batino

BAYAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INC., A unit of Lopez-owned Benpres Holdings Co., has asked the National Telecommunications Commission to give it higher points for track record so it could qualify for a third-generation or 3G license.

Bayantel vowed to shell out P1.2 billion yearly in capital investment for the 3G mobile project in the first five years of operations.

In the NTC ratings, Bayantel scored miserably in the track record category. The NTC said this was because Bayantel had failed to roll-out a cellular mobile phone service despite having a license to operate it. Aside from legal, technical and financial capability, 3G applicants were evaluated on the basis of track record, roll-out plan and service rates.

In its petition for reconsideration, the Benpres unit said it was "legally" prevented from engaging in mobile services by a court injunction that was lifted only in 2002, and subsequently, by a debt rehabilitation filed by its creditors.

Bayantel said it must have been given at least five points for track record and an additional one point for the roll-out plan.

"Bayantel's total score would (have been) 24.5 points, which is more than the minimum score required to qualify for the assignment of 3G frequency," the company said in its petition.

Bayantel was one of the five applicants that had failed to meet the NTC's standards and were, therefore, not given a 3G license.

Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Digitel Mobile Phils. Inc. (operator of Sun Cellular) and Connectivity Unlimited Resources Inc. or Cure passed the NTC standards for 3G operations.

Bayantel is competing with Multi-Media Telephony Inc. for the last 3G slot.

NTC Chair Ronald Solis said if no other company would qualify, the NTC would keep the fifth slot vacant and distribute the excess 3G frequency bands among the four qualified players later.

The Lopez phone company and Multi-Media each scored 18.5 out of a perfect score of 30.

Smart got a perfect score of 30, followed by Globe with 29. Gokongwei's Digitel Mobile had 28 while Cure scored 20.5.

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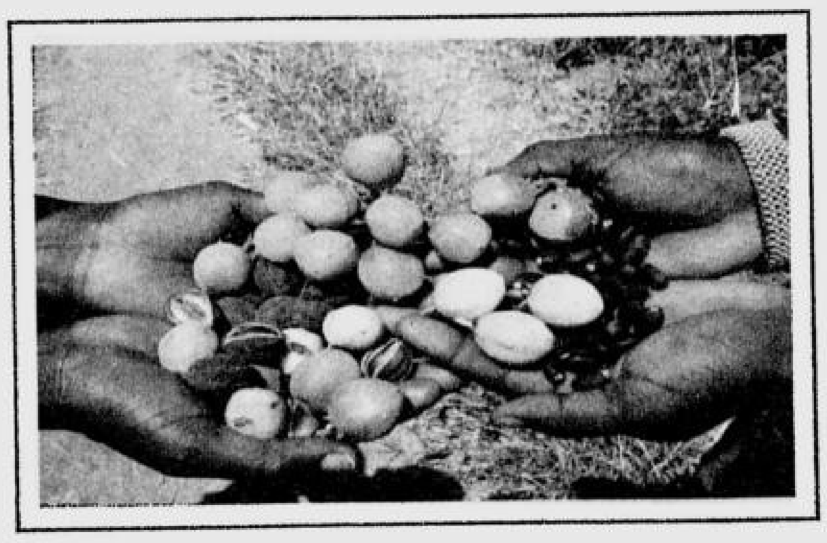

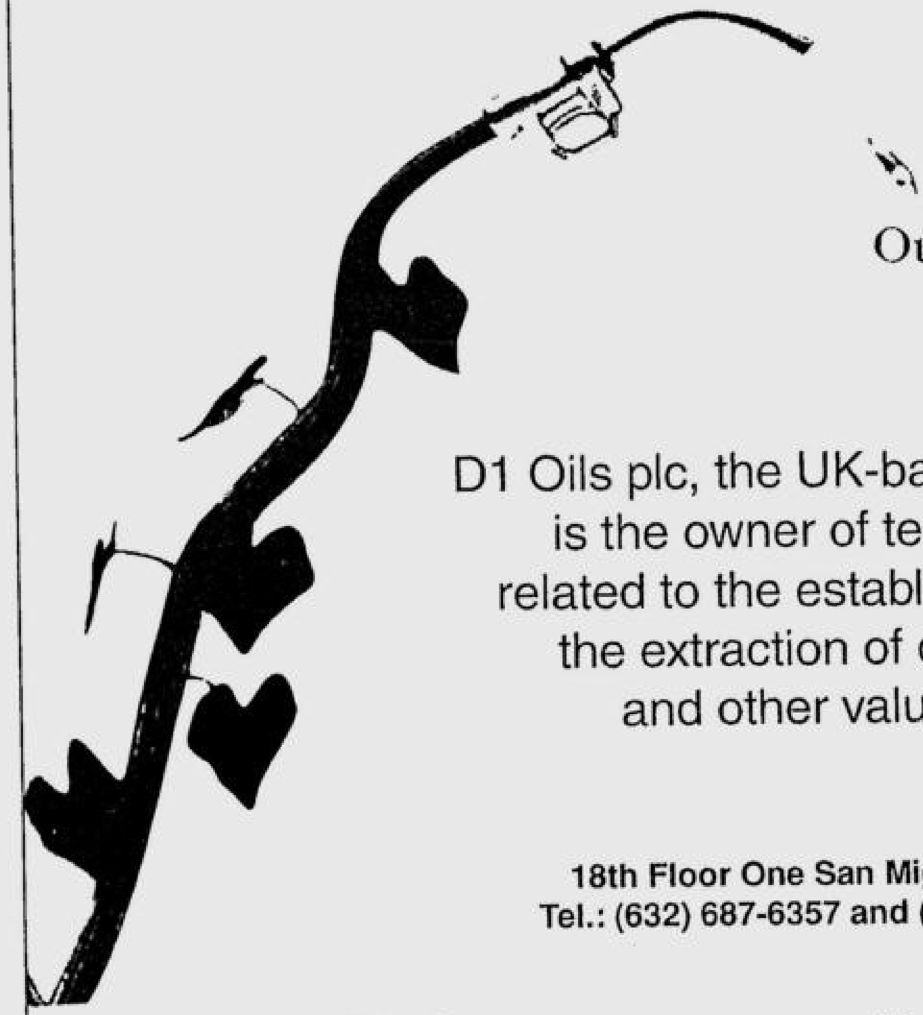

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#### LEGAL

Notice is given that the Estate of the late MAGDALENA GALANG RAFANAN was extrajudicially settled among heirs as per Doc 146 Page 30 Book I Series 2005 before Notary Public Atty. Humilde S. Ferrer of Quezon City
PDI-Jan. 12,19 & 26,2006

#### TUTORIAL LESSONS

1on1, Home Svc 09172056469

MENTORSPLUS 9319767

### HOUSEHOLD

#### HOUSEHOLD JOBS

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A'A MAIDS/YAYA 4386920

DOLE ACCREDITED AVAILABLE YAYA MAID TEL 5621236 / 5620020

Good Maid Yaya Driver 9957034

Help Agency 5328376 • 5321947

HOME EXPERT
YAYA/HMAIDS/F.DRIVER
773-8998•0918-7095816•

MARSIFOR AGENCY 4373040

Trusted Maids Yaya Driver7572089

Yaya, Cook H'maid 8957507

IVYLANA MAIDS 4331431
YAYA 4335931

#### LIPAT BAHAY

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

•Cheap 9260424/09163416775

•P1300/TRIP 742-14-57

TIPID LIPAT 681-7623

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1.5M-14M Nr McKinley Hills 4-5br 10% DP or 3Yrs No Int or No DP 10mins Fr. Ayala 0917-8313226

#### MANDALUYONG

NEAR SHAW BLVD
BnewThse/3stry/3br/3-4tb maids1-2grgeP3.780M8903461

#### MARIKINA

Bnew 4br3tb Jacuzi 3.2M 9487112

#### QUEZON CITY

LAVISTA /LGV LA415 5br 30% dp terms 11.9M 0917-8511193

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Republic of the Philippines

## HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

# NOTICE OF SALE

Please be informed that the property of the Home Guaranty Corporation is being offered for negotiated sale:

| TCT No. | PROPERTY LOCATION | TYPE | LOT AREA (SQM) | FLOOR AREA (SQM) | SELLING PRICE | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T-563763 | Block 8 Lot 2 Villa Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna | TOWNHOUSE | 35.00 | 41.00 | P578,490.00 | VACANT |

**FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION AT 896-04-25, 897-31-59, 897-32-90 OR VISIT OUR OFFICE AT JADE BLDG. NO. 335 SEN. GIL J. PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY.**

**Jonathan B. Briones – Villa Milagrosa Townhomes, San Pedro, Laguna**
**– 052-820-63-38 / 09178327366**
**Gloria Virata – Sta. Rosa and Cabuyao Laguna Properties**
**Geraldine Nicdao – Quezon Properties**

(Sgd.) **RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS**
OIC-VICE PRESIDENT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT / ACQUIRED
ASSETS DISPOSITION GROUP

(PDI–January 12. 2006)

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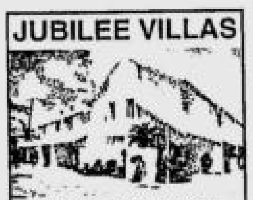
## REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

### CONDO/TWNHSE

#### QUEZON CITY

JUBILEE VILLAS



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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CELESTINA JIMENEZ CAPELLAN was extrajudicially settled by her heirs before Notary Public Atty Jimmy D. Lacebal of Mandaluyong City, per Doc No. 464 Page No. 94, Book No. XXIV, Series of 2005 (PDI- Jan. 05, 12 & 19, 2006)

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## NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with Republic Act 9184, the National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **February 07, 2006** at **10:00 a.m.** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila**, among all interested rice suppliers for the supply of the following:

| | COMMODITY | ARRIVAL PERIOD<br>Quantity | <br>Arrival |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. | 300,000 MT 25% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE | 10% OF THE VOL. TO BE AWARDED | FEB. 2006 |
| | | 50% OF THE VOL. TO BE AWARDED | MAR. 2006 |
| | | BALANCE | APR. 2006 |
| B. | 50,000 MT 15% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE | 50,000 MT | WITHIN APR. 2006 |
| C. | 50,000 MT 25% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE, IRON FORTIFIED RICE | 50,000 MT | NLT MAY 2006 |

in fifty (50) kilograms net each in polypropylene bags suitable for rice export with NFA markings with an appropriated budget from corporate resources, as follows:

| Amount | Specification |
|---|---|
| Php 0.769 B | 15% brokens |
| Php 4.450 B | 25% brokens |
| Php 0.850 B | iron fortified rice |

Source countries shall be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, Australia and/or U.S.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations in US$/MT, CFR, FO and FOB on the basis of Documents against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred twenty (120) days from receipt by NFA of the complete set of original documents required for payment and on the basis of mandatory countertrade and countertrade performed on best effort. Otherwise, bids shall be considered non-responsive. Offers for iron fortified rice shall be on an optional basis only. Maximum quantity to be offered for U.S., Pakistan and/or Australian original shall be 50,000 MT only.

Government and private suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last three (3) years (2003, 2004 and 2005) and do not have a bad track record may be awarded the following maximum volume for the 15% and 25% brokens long grain white rice:

PRIVATE — 50,000 MT (WITH GOOD TRACK RECORD)
25,000 MT (WITHOUT TRACK RECORD)
GOVERNMENT — 200,000 MT (WITH GOOD TRACK RECORD)
— 50,000 MT (WITHOUT TRACK RECORD)

For the iron fortified rice, the maximum volume to be awarded for private and government supplier with good track record is 50,000 MT and 25,000 MT for private and government supplier without track record.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification Offerors shall indicate the minimum volume acceptable in case of award. Failure to do so, shall mean acceptance of the Seller the awarded volume.

Maximum load capacity of vessel shall be 15,000 MT.

Container shipment will be allowed for non-iron fortified rice only but up to a maximum volume of 15,000 MT only.

However, suppliers and/or source companies with pending import-related accounts/liability prior 2004 are considered to have bad track record and are not allowed to participate in the bid.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 3% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within five (5) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instructions to Bidders maybe secured starting **12 January 2006** thru **MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ,** Assistant Department Manager and **MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO,** Division Chief III, **Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.**

The Terms of reference and offer sheets will be available from **January 12 to 27, 2006** (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on **25 January 2006 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.**

**Submission of Bids will be on February 07, 2006 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.** Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – January 12 & 19 2006)

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*"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord"* 2 Corinthians 5:8

## NISENA ORTIZ DE ROCES

of Palo Alto, California

*went to be with the Lord on December 3, 2005 at the age of 88.*

She is survived by:

Her husband, **Francisco "Pipo" Roces**
their children : **Butch** and **Zeny**, **Maribel** and **Jerry**, **Mayenne**, **Tina** and **Seb**,
**Popi** and **Arlene**, **Ana**, **Manuel** and **Alice**
their grandchildren : **Brian** and **Joie**; **Margie**, **Ric** and **Ysette**; **Robert** and **Anthony**;
**Johanna**, **Mike** and **Danielle**; **Chesca**, **Chuckie**, **Casey** and **Sam**;
**Nikki**, **Maurice**, and **Gabbi**; **Celine**, **Ondrea** and **Bailee**;
their great grandchildren : **Simone**, **Camille** and **Alexandra**; **Megan**, **Taylor**;
**Peyton** and **Logan**.

Her sister **Rica Davis**, and her brother **Joe Ortiz**.

Her son-in-law **Willie Hernandez**, and grandson **Francis Roces**, went before her.

Requiem Mass and interment will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 14th at the Santuario de San Antonio.

May we request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

## Pepito Violan Torres

of San Pablo City and Malolos, Bulacan

*February 4, 1920 – January 8, 2006*

**Former General Education Supervisor, DECS San Pablo City**
**1990 Gintong Ama Awardee for Education Sector**

*"And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*
**"John 6:39-40"**

Beloved *Itay* to
Son **Joselito**, **Belinda**, **Jose Angelo**, and **Bea Andrea**;
Son **Josefino**, **Carmela**, **Carmel Christine**, **Caroline Charmaine**,
and **Claire Claudine**;
Son **Jose**, **Leonila**, and **Julienne**;
Daughter **Maria Paz T. Urcia**, **Luis**, and **Jose Edru**;
Daughter **Maria Piedad**, **Faith Marie Therese**,
and **Justine Gabriel Bryan**;
Daughter **Maria Pureza T. Perea**, and **Rodolfo**;
Daughter **Maria Pilar**;
Sister **Liwayway T. De Mesa**;
Sisters-in-law **Erlisa BI Sofer** and **Maurita I. Samson**
Nephews and Nieces

His remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, San Pablo City Cathedral. Interment is scheduled on Tuesday, January 17, 2006 at the San Pablo Memorial Park after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

***"I am happy... I met God"***, *Itay* after receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction

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*The Lord bless you and keep you!*
*The Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!*
*The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!*
Numbers 6:24-26

## SAFORA CENTENO JAMIR

Of Sta. Cruz, Laguna and Imus, Cavite
April 20, 1926 - January 9, 2006

Passed away at the age of 79 to join her beloved husband former Mayor **Jose V. Jamir** (†), her sisters and brothers.

Her children, **Joselito & Emmilou Jamir**, **Fe Delilah & Renato Perez**, **Alan & Gladys Jamir**, **Bong & Nelin Jamir**, **Joy & Annie Jamir**, **Danny & Rose Jamir**, **Rhea & Edwin Balcruz**; grandchildren, **Jigger & Maricris Scoop & Arlene**, **Bubbles**, **Chips & Libay**; **Erick**, **Aileen**, **Manjo**, **Jasmine**; **Jingjing**, **Chelo**, **Bea** and **Jocef**; **Jem**, **JV**; **Jolly**, **Sandra** and **Ali**, **Joey**; **RJ**, **JC**, **Mariel**, **Jed**; **Angel**, **Aira**; great grandchildren **Miggy**, **Alj**, **Gabby**, **Rej**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence in 124 Medicion II-A, Imus, Cavite. Interment will be on Sunday, January 15, 2006 at the Angelus Eternal Garden, Imus, Cavite after the 1:30 p.m. mass at the Imus Cathedral.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **WISTRON INFOCOMM (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Provider of Services (Test and Other Service Facilities for the Repair / Upgrade of defective electronics products** on a **Non-Pioneer** Status with capacity **185,178 pieces per year** with project/plant site located at **No. 4 Rizal Highway corner Alm High Avenue, SBIP, Phase 1, Subic Bay Freeport Zone.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

**(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and
Registration Department

(PDI – January 12, 2006)

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BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti

### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **Fortune Apparel Inc.** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as an **Expanding Export Producer of Garments** with a capacity of **25,000 dozens per year** and with project/plant site located at # F. Manalo cor. G. Raymundo St., Bambang, Pasig City.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

**(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - January 12, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
**REGIONAL TRIAL COURT**
Ninth Judicial Region
Branch 12
Zamboanga City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR REHABILITATION OF
NONITO J. BERNARDO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SPECIAL CASE NO. 5384

NONITO J. BERNARDO
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Petitioner
x-----------------------------------------------x

### STAY ORDER

BEFORE this Court is a verified petition for corporate rehabilitation with prayer for a stay order filed by the above-named petitioner corporation on December 21, 2005.

Briefly, the petitioner corporation alleges that its income drastically declined during the last four years compared to its capacity during the 1990's attributed to several economic factors such as severe business conditions experienced by them from 1998 to 2003 which lead to further decrease in their income during the years 2003 to 2004 which aggravated its worsening financial situation to the extend that it already failed to service its outstanding loans which as of the filing of their petition already amounted to a total of P89,116,759.82 which it proposes to reduce by fifty percent (50%) within the first two (2) years of rehabilitation and to fully service their remaining indebtedness starting on the fifth and last year thereof.

A careful examination of the petition shows that the same substantially conforms to the provision of Section 2, Rule 4 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation and appears to be sufficient in form and substance.

IN VIEW THEREOF, this Court hereby issues a Stay Order, pursuant to Section 6, Rule 4 of the above-cited Rules and hereby orders the following:

1.) Appointing Victor Augustus B. Filamor as rehabilitation receiver who shall be considered as an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The rehabilitation receiver must post a bond of P1,000,000.00, Philippine Currency, before exercising his powers, duties and functions and must take his oath, as provided for under Section 15, Rule 4 of the aforecited Rules. The petitioner corporation is directed to immediately serve a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Victor Augustus B. Filamor, who shall manifest his acceptance or no-acceptance of his appointment not later than five (5) days from his receipt of the same.
2.) Suspending and/or staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or not, against the petitioner corporation, and its guarantors and sureties not solidarily liable with the petitioner corporation including the staying of all proceedings for collection filed against the petitioner corporation, and the staying of the enforcement/implementation of applications for extra-judicial foreclosure sales and actual foreclosure sales, if any, against the real and personal properties of the petitioner corporation;
3.) Prohibiting the petitioner corporation from selling, encumbering, transferring or disposing in any manner, any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business;
4.) Prohibiting the petitioner corporation from making any payments of its liabilities outstanding as of the date of the filing of the petition which was on December 21, 2005;
5.) Prohibiting the suppliers of the petitioners corporation from withholding supply of goods and services in the ordinary course of business for as long as the petitioner corporation makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order;
6.) Directing the petitioner corporation to pay in full all administrative expenses incurred after the issuance of this Stay Order;

The initial hearing on this petition is set before this Court on January 25, 2006, (Wednesday) at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. All creditors and other interested parties including the Securities and Exchange Commission are hereby directed to file with this Court and serve upon the petitioner corporation, a verified comment and/or opposition to the herein petition attaching thereto the supporting documents and sworn statements thereto, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing as set forth above, and they are put on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating during the proceedings before this Court. All creditors and interested parties are further directed to secure from this Court, copies of the petition with all its annexes within such time as to enable them to file their verified comment and/or opposition thereto and to prepare them for the initial hearing and to attain this purpose, the petitioner corporation is hereby ordered to file with this Court initially, twenty (20) additional copies of the petition and all its annexes within ten (10) days from receipt of this Stay Order.

The petitioner corporation is hereby directed to caused the publication of this Stay Order at the business section of the Philippine Star, The Daily Inquirer and one other newspaper of national and general circulation in the Philippines considering the possible presence of other creditors and interested parties, once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least seven (7) days prior to the date set for the initial hearing as set forth above, at the sole expense of the petitioner corporation.

Atty Nimfa Padao, the Branch Clerk of Court, is ordered to see to it that the Court's Process Server shall immediately serve copies of this Stay Order upon the following persons, to wit:

1. Nonito J. Bernardo - (the authorized representative of the petitioner corporation) c/o Nonito J. Bernardo Development Corporation, Ayala Barangay, Zamboanga City
2. Atty. Teodoro Jose S. Matta and Atty. Maria Katrina Bole-Veguillas - (petitioner corporation's lead counsels) c/o Dela Vega Matta Bole-Veguillas & Associates Law Offices, G/F One Primrose Place, 663 Boni Avenue, Plainview, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
3. Atty. Susan N. de los Reyes - (co-counsel for petitioner corporation) c/o Delos Reyes Law Office, Pirates Cove, Mayor Jaldon Street, Canelar, Zamboanga City
4. Victor Augustus B. Filamor - (Court appointed rehabilitation receiver) c/o C1 28 B, Padilla, San Juan, Metro Manila
5. The Honorable Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
6. Bank of Commerce, Zamboanga City
7. United Coconut Planters Bank, Zamboanga City
8. Keppel Bank, Zamboanga City

SO ORDERED.

This 27th day of December 2005 at Zamboanga City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) GREGORIO V. DE LA PEÑA, III
Presiding Judge

(PDI - Jan. 12 & 16, 2006)

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**BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-INFRASTRUCTURE**
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as **Triple A** with **Large "B"** classification for **Buildings – Structures**, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

Title : Construction of Cebu International Convention Center (Cebu Megadome) – Phase 1
Location : Mandaue City, Cebu
ABC of Contract To be Bid : P100,000,000.00
Duration : Five (5) months
Scope of Work : Clearing/Site Development, Building Construction (Foundation & Structures)

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the ABC to be bid, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening and in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Submission of Eligibility Documents & Statements and Screening, Bid and Performance Securities, Pre-bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract, shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

| BAC-INFRA Activities | Schedule |
|---|---|
| 1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) | January 12-20, 2006 |
| 2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms | January 12-19, 2006 |
| 3. Receipt of Eligibility Documents & Statements | January 12-20, 2006 |
| 4. Notice of Eligibility Check Results | January 24, 2006 |
| 5. Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents | January 24-27, 2006 |
| 6. Pre-bid Conference | February 1, 2006 |
| 7. Receipt and Opening of Bids | February 13, 2006 |

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Legislative Building, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 416-5400 local 110.

The Secretariat will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidders declared by the BAC-INFRA who are considered to be eligible to bid, upon payment to the Cash Division a non-refundable amount of Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00).

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman

(PDI–January 12 & 19, 2006)
Posted at PGSO, PIO & www.cebu.gov.ph

# S. Korean firm bags $178-M Petron deal

## Growing market, rising prices seen prompting further expansion of petrochemical business

**By Abigail L. Ho**

INDUSTRY GIANT PETRON Corp. has awarded a $178.4-million engineering, procurement and construction contract to South Korean firm Daelim Industrial Ltd. for its PetroFCC project.

The PetroFCC project involves the upgrading of the oil firm's thermofor catalytic cracker (TCC) to a fluidized catalytic cracker (FCC) and putting up a new propylene recovery unit.

In a statement issued yesterday, Petron said the project would boost operating efficiencies at its refinery in Bataan, which was currently producing 180,000 barrels of fuel a day.

The improvement in efficiency will result in higher production of white products, as well as the extraction of the high-value petrochemical propylene, Petron said.

Propylene is the feedstock used in plastic resins production. Plastic resins, in turn, are used to produce home electrical appliances, automobile parts and detergent additives.

The new units would be commissioned in early 2008, Petron said.

"The approval of the contract award marks the company's further expansion into the petrochemicals business. This complementary avenue will give us additional revenue streams that will ensure Petron's growth and sustained profitability over the long term," Petron public affairs manager Virginia Ruivivar said.

The company said it wanted to take advantage of the rapidly growing petrochemical market, which was even outpacing global gross domestic product growth.

Unlike the petroleum industry, which had been showing a slowdown in demand, Petron said the market for petrochemical products was expected to grow by around 5 percent yearly between 2005 and 2015.

"Petrochemicals also command better regional and local prices than other petroleum products," the oil firm added.

Petron's PetroFCC project forms part of its $300-million, three-year Refinery Master Plan, which will enable the company to extract petrochemicals for both the local and regional markets.

The plan also includes putting up additional refinery units to extract petrochemicals benzene and toluene, as well as expanding the oil firm's existing mixed xylene production capacity.

In the first nine months of 2005, exports, particularly of mixed xylene, accounted for more than a third of Petron's close to P4.8 billion in net income.

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BRITISH businessman Early C. Hansfield visited the country for talks with Philippine labor officials for the possible employment of Filipino professionals and construction workers in Turks and Caicos islands, which are British colonies in the Caribbean Islands. These islands are being developed as tourist havens. ROGER MARGALLO

# Why in Davao?

**MINDANAWORLD**

*Joji Ilagan-Bian*

DAVAO, THE CITY OF BLOOMS from islands to highlands, is the site of the 25th Asean Tourism Forum (ATF), which will be held on Jan. 13 to 21 , 2006.

Indeed, Davao City is blooming and booming. Investments in terms of total capitalization of businesses continued to surge from only P62 billion in 2000 to P69 billion in 2001, P80 billion in 2002, P84 billion in 2003, and to P118.5 billion in 2004. The sharp growth was evident in the city's tourism, construction, agriculture, and export sectors.

Tourist arrivals based on air passenger traffic and hotel occupancy volume have been increasing since 2000. Davao City's tourism receipts as of the first semester of 2005 amounted to P5.22 billion, 13 percent higher than year-ago's P4.62 billion.

Also, this city has recorded an unprecedented increase in the value of private building construction, hitting P7.4 billion in 2004 from only P773 million in 2001.

So did exports, rising to $993 million in 2004 from $848 million in 2003 and $738 million in 2002, with the balance of trade further widening in Davao City's favor.

"These figures are making Davao City even more attractive to tourists, many of whom are corporate executives and entrepreneurs on vacation who can't ignore a business opportunity when they see one," said ATF 2006 secretary general and Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp. executive director Daniel Corpuz.

Davao is the capital of Southern Mindanao and one of the world's largest cities in terms of land area, spanning 244,000 hectares. This sprawling metropolis has emerged as the business, investment and tourism hub of Southern Philippines.

Citing Davao City as the next pillar of Philippine tourism, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said it was President Arroyo's personal choice as the venue for ATF 2006.

The 25th ATF is expected to significantly boost Mindanao's economy and prop up investor confidence in the region and the rest of the Philippines.

Imagine the kind of international exposure that Davao City and the rest of Mindanao will gain from the ATF, which will be participated in by delegates from the 10- member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the major wholesale travel trade buyers from all over the world, all translating to thousands of foreign and local visitors flocking to Southern Philippines during that nine-day event.

Tourism had contributed substantially to Mindanao's expanding economy, posting growth of 4.4 percent in 2002 and 4.5 percent in 2003 and consistently accounting for about nine million of national employment.

There have been remarkable increments in the region's air and sea transport volumes, both passengers and cargo, because of increased tourism activities particularly in Southern and Northern Mindanao, which posted more than 1.2 million foreign and domestic tourists. The international airport in Southern Mindanao's tourism and investment hub recorded around 1.4 million incoming and outgoing passengers in 2004, while hotel occupancy rates posted a 6.5-percent increase in the January-June 2005 from its year-ago level.

The impact of these developments can be felt throughout the region's economic landscape, especially in the food, transport, hotel, resort, entertainment, recreation, retail and services sectors.

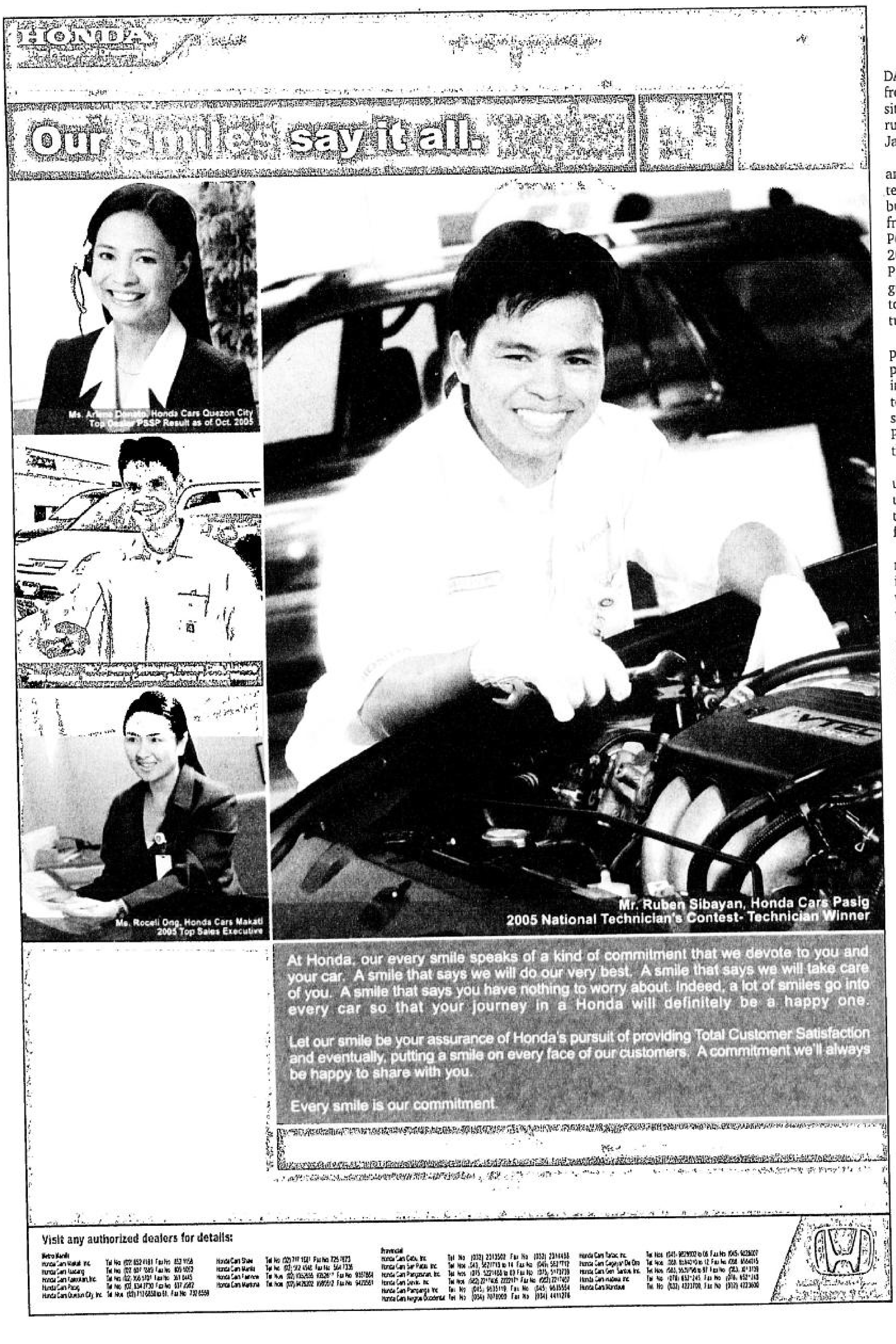
Quite evidently, the government is taking advantage of ATF 2006 to launch the development of Mindanao as a tourist haven and Davao as the center of the tourism industry in Mindanao and present it to the world in that perspective.

This move will, thus, correct the wrong perception that Mindanao is not a safe place to visit, to invest in, or even to stay.

Participating in the ATF are the 10 Asean member-countries, their exhibitors from various sectors of the tourism industry, and 470 buyers and media from six continents. All these translate to thousands of foreign guests and tourists, who will soon see Mindanao in a totally different light.

Why in Davao? The answers are obvious!

*(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao; Con-Com member, vice chair of the Mindanao Commission Of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET; Mindanao representative, Export Development Council; chair, Joji Ilagan Foundation; Former chair, Mindanao Business Council. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)*



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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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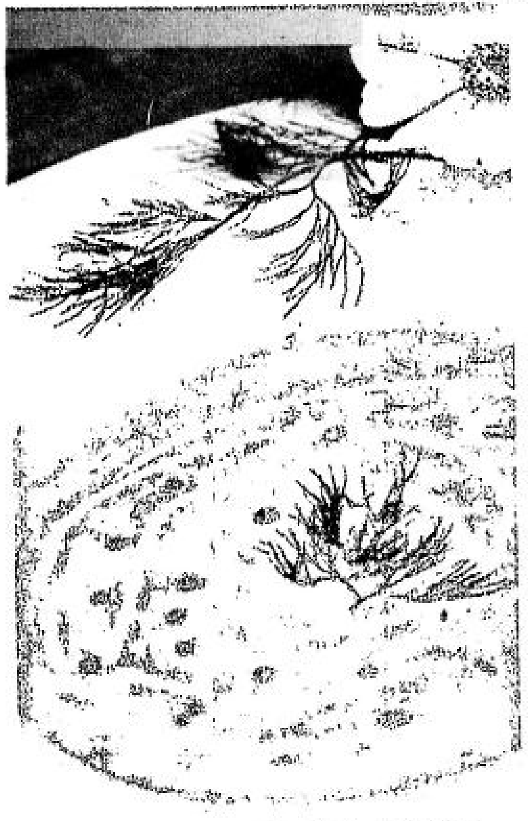
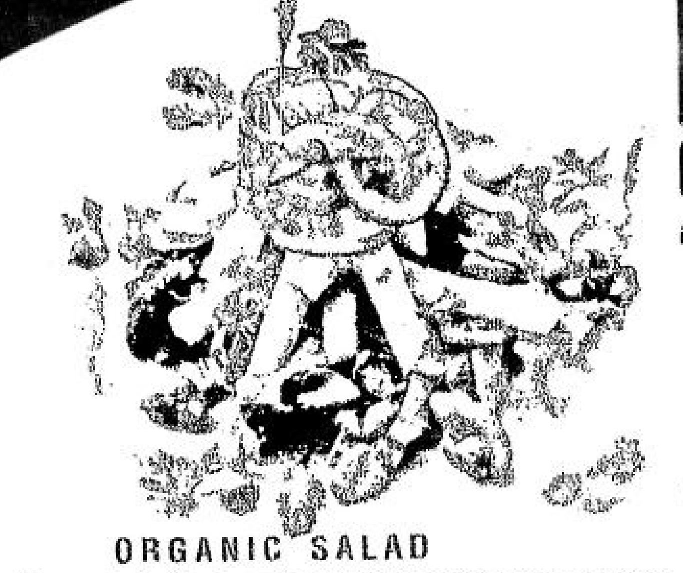


FRESHLY MADE SOUP
Carrot-ginger soup with basil, dabs of extra virgin olive oil and dill



ORGANIC SALAD
Jicama salad with pineapple, cucumber and miso orange dressing

MEATLESS ENTRÉE
Shiitake mushroom ragout with corn polenta and salsa verde to go with vegetarian paella of organic rice served buffet style

QUICK BITES
Tomato-basil mango stack

**NEW DIET RESOLUTION**

# Fine dining without the guilt

**Text by Lynett A. Villariba**
**Photos by Raffy Lerma**

AFTER PIGGING OUT ON holiday food, pushing digestion to the limit, a stuffed body begs for a cleanup.

The coming of a new cycle of time only tells us that late-night dinners and artificially processed food—cured, chemicalized, radiated and devitalized—on top of fatty fries and alcoholic drinks we have been bingeing on, are the forbidden food that will cause our fall from grace.

And so we recycle a perennial new year's resolution to watch our diet, this time going for extra mileage in health conservation, if not restoration, even if it were to last only until the next holiday binge.

Bucking conflicting diet advice "experts" cannot seem to agree on, our recycled resolve draws us into this new diet thinking that maximizes health and happiness: Since what we eat deeply affects the way we think, feel and behave, we let our body, palate and senses indulge on—rather than deprive it of—nature's flavors in their pristine state before fertilizers and chemical pollution demineralized the earth and dulled our tastebuds.

The quest for correct nutrition has led us to the foothills of Mt. Malarayat deep in Lipa, Batangas, where we found a health resort full of promise. After three years and eight recognition awards from the international wellness industry, The Farm at San Benito has gone a long way in raising natural nutrition consciousness with each visit.

To help us segue into a nutrition trend that is catching on as a common sense fix for civilization's systems breakdown, executive chef Felix Schoener has whipped up a native palate-friendly menu for the new year to complement the world-class health resort's holistic and wellness program.

Founder Eckard Rempe names The Farm's revitalized resto VEG.A.N! to exemplify what it stands for: Vegetarian, Amazingly Nutritious! gourmet dining in a way that takes the guilt out of celebrating life through food.

The wellness diet as espoused by the natural movement—from spa habitues worldwide to an emerging group of Filipino natu-

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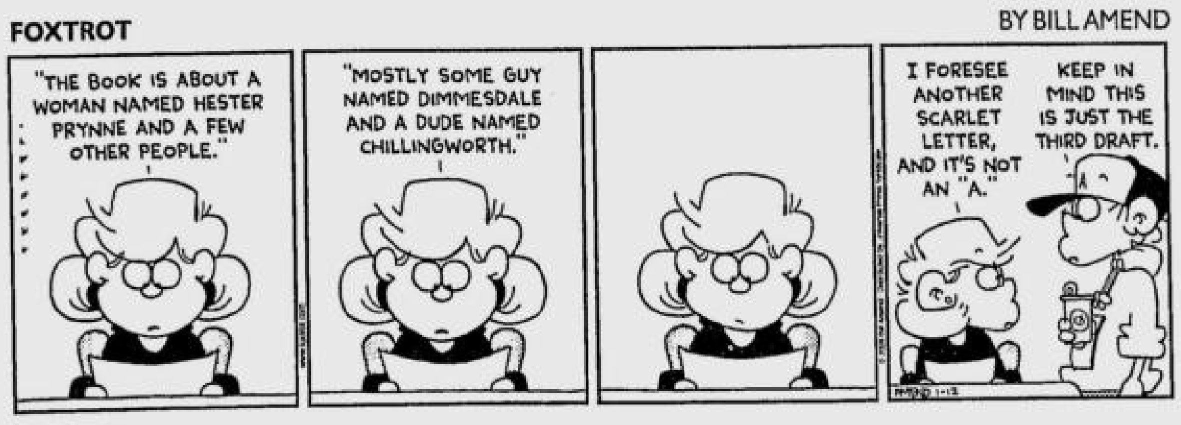
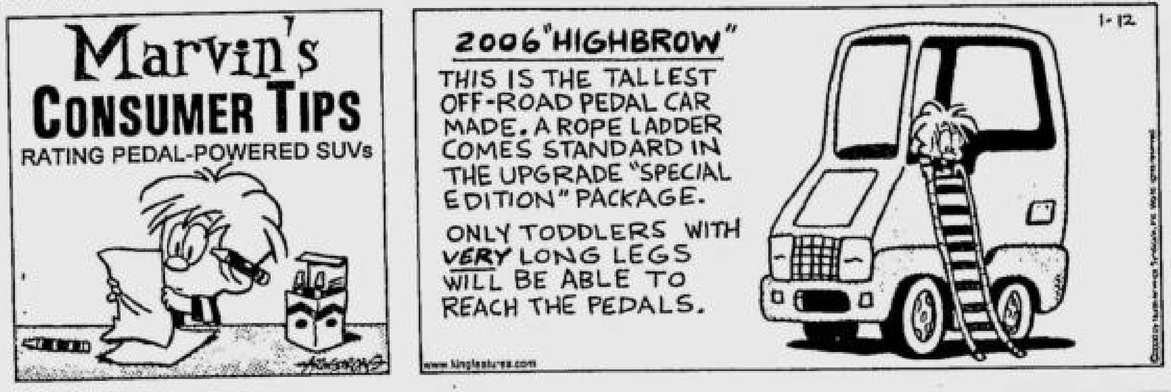
**FOXTROT**

BY BILL AMEND


"THE BOOK IS ABOUT A WOMAN NAMED HESTER PRYNNE AND A FEW OTHER PEOPLE."
"MOSTLY SOME GUY NAMED DIMMESDALE AND A DUDE NAMED CHILLINGWORTH."
I FORESEE ANOTHER SCARLET LETTER, AND IT'S NOT AN "A."
KEEP IN MIND THIS IS JUST THE THIRD DRAFT.
A
AMEND 1-12

**MARVIN**

BY TOM ARMSTRONG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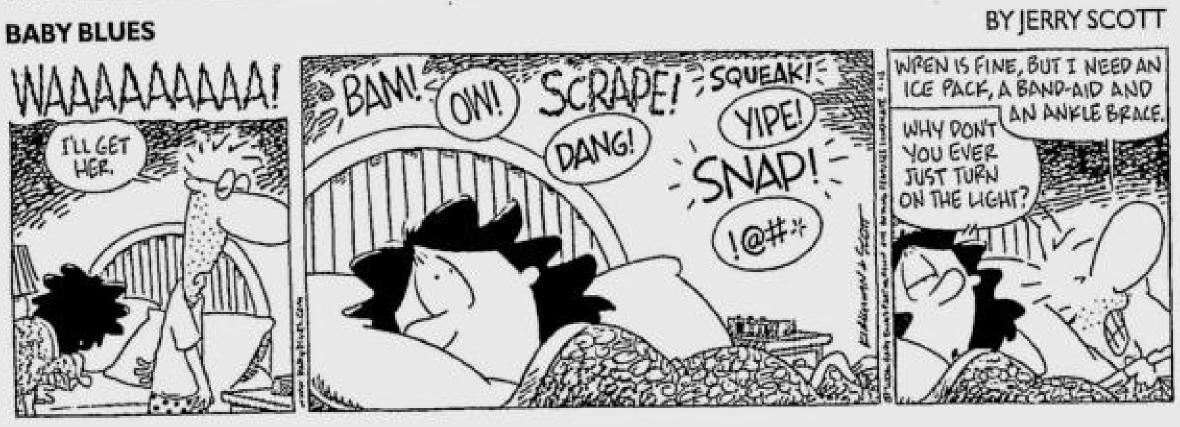
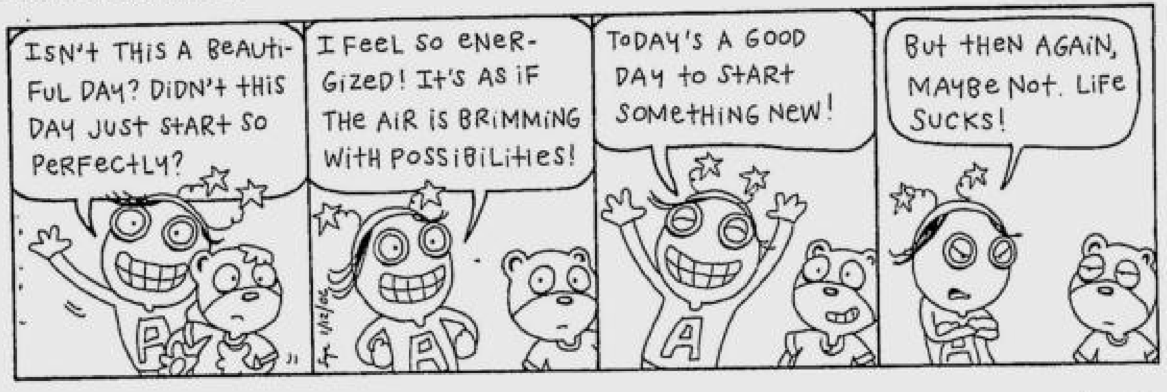
**BABY BLUES**

BY JERRY SCOTT


WAAAAAAAAA!
I'LL GET HER.
BAM!
OW!
SCRAPE!
SQUEAK!
DANG!
YIPE!
SNAP!
!@#*
WREN IS FINE, BUT I NEED AN ICE PACK, A BAND-AID AND AN ANKLE BRACE.
WHY DON'T YOU EVER JUST TURN ON THE LIGHT?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

**ATOMO AND WEBOY**

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ISN'T THIS A BEAUTIFUL DAY? DIDN'T THIS DAY JUST START SO PERFECTLY?
I FEEL SO ENERGIZED! IT'S AS IF THE AIR IS BRIMMING WITH POSSIBILITIES!
TODAY'S A GOOD DAY TO START SOMETHING NEW!
BUT THEN AGAIN, MAYBE NOT. LIFE SUCKS!
A

## HOROSCOPE

### BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You have a clever, modern mind, and a skilled way with words. At times, you inspire others. In your youth, you seek adventure. (People love your stories.) You appear casual and offhand; however, you are committed to and professional about whatever you embrace. (People underestimate you.) The year ahead is full of exciting new beginnings. Be ready for anything.

**Birthdate of:** Kirstie Alley, actress; Jeff Bezos, businessman; Joe Frazier, boxer.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** This is a good day to buy technology for your home. You might want to get a computer or something for your entertainment system. Or it might be a new gadget for your kitchen. (You love gadgets.)

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** This is a great day to talk to siblings and loved ones. Be sympathetic. Others are willing to listen to you as well.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** Impulse shopping can pay off today. You might also discover new moneymaking ideas. Something connected with your cash flow or purchasing power pleases you.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** The Moon is in your sign today. You feel great! It's like you have a new lease on life. You see exciting ways of doing things. Yay!

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** This is a restless day for you; nevertheless, work behind the scenes if you can. Surprise news connected with the government or large institutions is likely.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** Talk to friends and groups today. You'll definitely learn something unusual and interesting. Perhaps somebody new will enter your circle of friends. (This person could be a character!)

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Share your bright ideas with bosses, parents and VIPs. They'll be impressed. Anything related to reform or an improvement to technology will be well-received.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** Exciting travel possibilities or educational opportunities could present themselves today. If so, your window of opportunity will be brief. Act quickly!

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** This is a good day to talk about shared possessions and anything you own jointly with another. You will probably come out on the winning side!

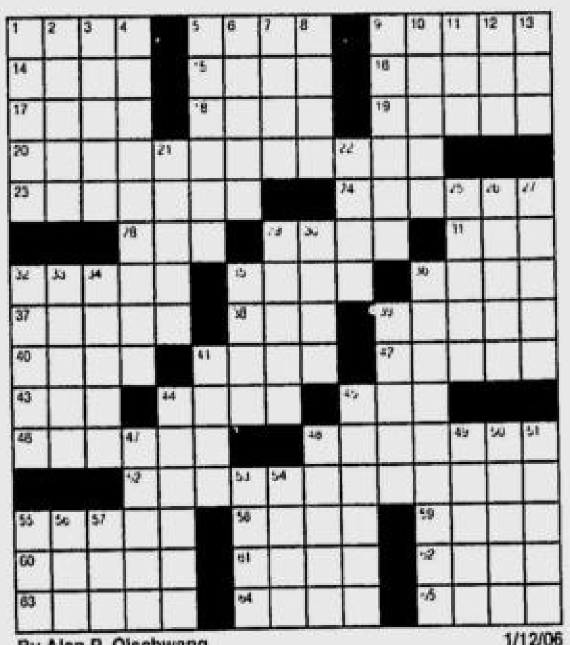
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** Conversations with partners and friends are lively today. Someone has a little surprise for you! It could be good news that pleases you. (One can only hope.)

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** New technology at work might please you. Your sign is comfortable with technology. (Aquarius rules computers and electricity.) Be open to changes. Your job might change in some way as well. Welcome any improvements.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** Exciting flirtations will catch you off-guard, but they will please you! Vacation plans look exciting. All the arts are favored today. This is an excellent day to teach children or enjoy playful activities with them.

## DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 DOD part
5 Flight school final
9 Corporal O'Reilly
14 Very unusual
15 Stadium level
16 January in Spain
17 Collection of ancient poetry
18 Winglike parts
19 Mathis hit
20 Start of Don Herold quote
23 Ruby
24 Playwright Eugene
28 Tax collectors' letters
29 Attired
31 Hamm or Farrow
32 Director Ponti
35 Trudge
36 Captures
37 Part 2 of quote
38 Part 3 of quote
39 Part 4 of quote
40 Act petulant
41 Oversupply
42 Fences the loot
43 Table scrap
44 Rosebud, e.g.
45 City in GA
46 Snuggle
48 Shirt parts
52 End of quote
55 Pesto sauce herb
58 Saab model
59 Race in "The Time Machine"
60 Protein acid
61 Actress Teri
62 Solitary
63 Seraglio
64 Actress Ione
65 Walked heavily


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65

By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

1/12/06

DOWN
1 Stallone movie, "Judge __"
2 Quoth "The Raven" he did
3 Flip side of supine
4 Chuck Yeager, e.g.
5 Barrel parts
6 Lubricated
7 Shakespearean king
8 Mining findings
9 Send back
10 Japanese cartooning style
11 __ Plaines, IL
12 Gallery works
13 Rogers or Acuff
21 Typo
22 Take a __ off
25 Spin doctor's concern
26 Illuminate
27 Shoe forms
29 Smoke mass
30 Churl
32 Poultry choice
33 Revere
34 Overwhelming defeats
35 "Gomer __, USMC"
36 Fundamentalist region
39 San __, CA
41 Singer Campbell
44 Aspen zigzag
45 Veep of the '90s
47 Cable
48 Word of apology
49 Heroism
50 Low-budget prefix
51 Hit the slopes
53 Base-stealer stoppers
54 Shipbuilding wood
55 Scornful exclamation
56 Physicians' org.
57 Knight's title

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | L | E | C | T | ■ | M | A | S | T | ■ | T | A | K | E |
| B | Y | N | O | W | ■ | A | M | A | S | ■ | A | R | A | M |
| A | N | Y | B | O | D | Y | O | U | T | T | H | E | R | E |
| N | E | A | R | E | R | ■ | S | T | R | A | I | T | E | N |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | D | E | S | ■ | E | A | S | T | E | N | D |
| V | A | T | ■ | G | A | L | A | ■ | P | S | I | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| E | M | U | ■ | E | R | A | T | O | ■ | ■ | A | G | U | A |
| N | O | B | O | D | Y | S | B | U | S | I | N | E | S | S |
| A | K | E | R | ■ | ■ | H | A | G | E | N | ■ | N | E | T |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | C | P | A | ■ | T | H | A | D | ■ | T | R | A |
| A | N | T | H | I | L | L | ■ | T | R | I | B | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| L | O | C | A | T | I | O | N | ■ | E | G | R | E | S | S |
| E | V | E | R | Y | B | O | D | Y | D | O | E | S | I | T |
| V | E | L | D | ■ | I | S | A | O | ■ | E | V | A | D | E |
| E | L | L | S | ■ | S | E | K | O | ■ | S | E | I | S | M |

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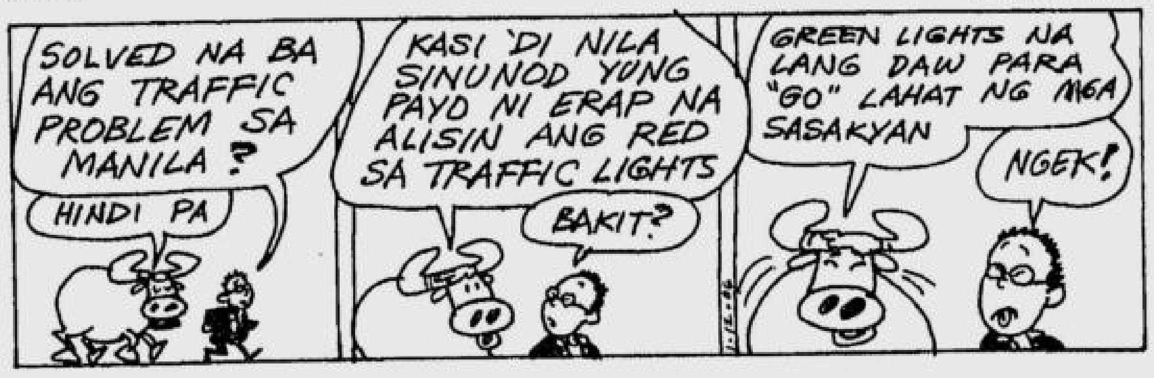
1/12/06

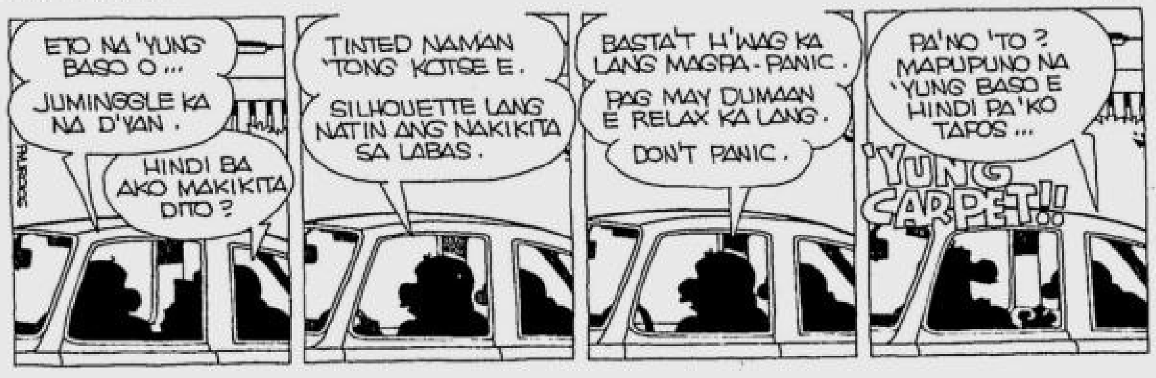
**A. LIPIN**

BY JESS ABRERA


SOLVED NA BA ANG TRAFFIC PROBLEM SA MANILA?
HINDI PA
KASI 'DI NILA SINUNOD YUNG PAYO NI ERAP NA ALISIN ANG RED SA TRAFFIC LIGHTS
BAKIT?
GREEN LIGHTS NA LANG DAW PARA "GO" LAHAT NG MGA SASAKYAN
NGEK!
1-12-06

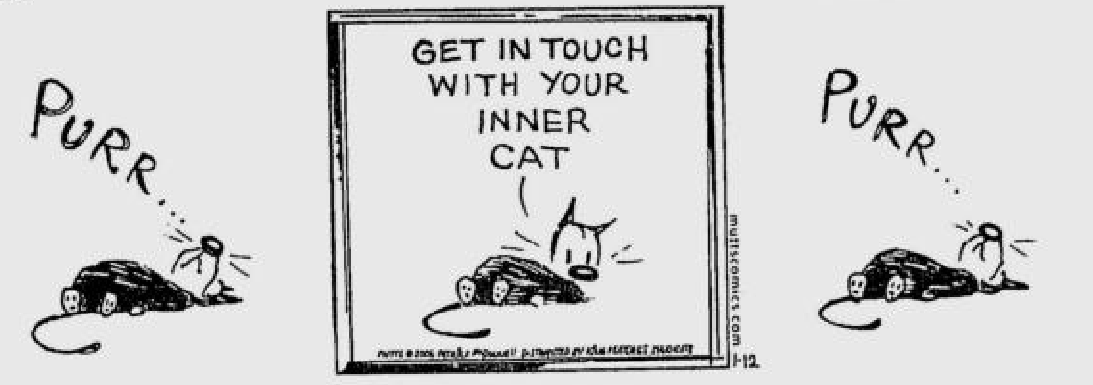
**PUGAD BABOY**

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ETO NA 'YUNG BASO O...
JUMINGGLE KA NA D'YAN.
HINDI BA AKO MAKIKITA DITO?
TINTED NAMAN 'TONG KOTSE E.
SILHOUETTE LANG NATIN ANG NAKIKITA SA LABAS.
BASTA'T H'WAG KA LANG MAGPA-PANIC.
PAG MAY DUMAAN E RELAX KA LANG.
DON'T PANIC.
PA'NO 'TO? MAPUPUNO NA 'YUNG BASO E HINDI PA'KO TAPOS...
'YUNG CARPET!!

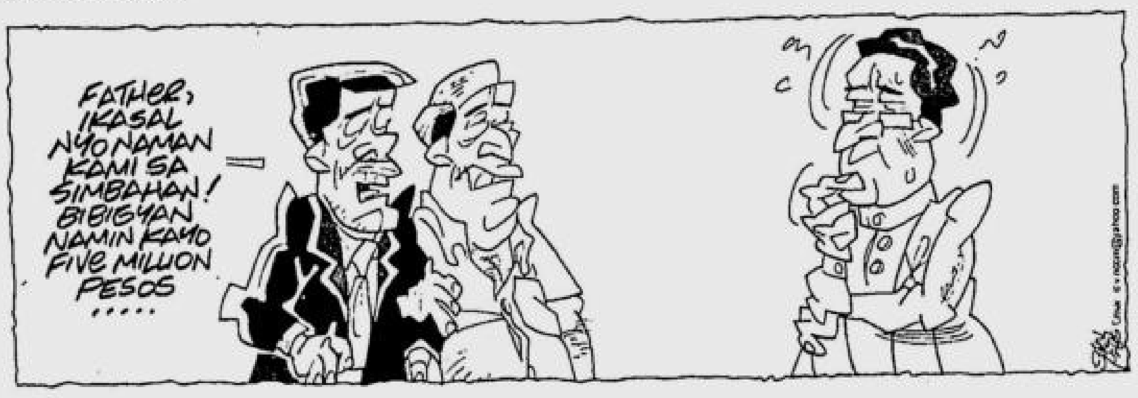
**MUTTS**

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PURR...
GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INNER CAT
PURR...
muttscomics.com
1-12

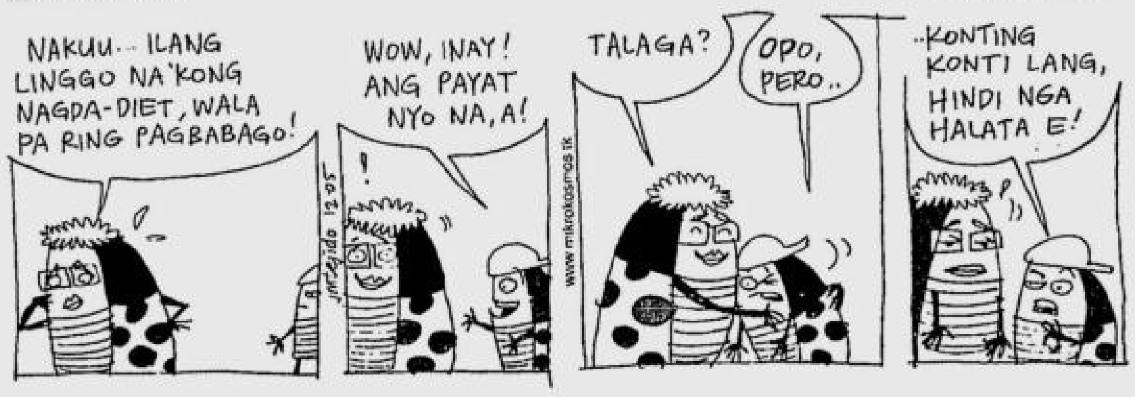
**DIVINE COMEDY**

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


FATHER, IKASAL NYO NAMAN KAMI SA SIMBAHAN! BIBIGYAN NAMIN KAYO FIVE MILLION PESOS.....

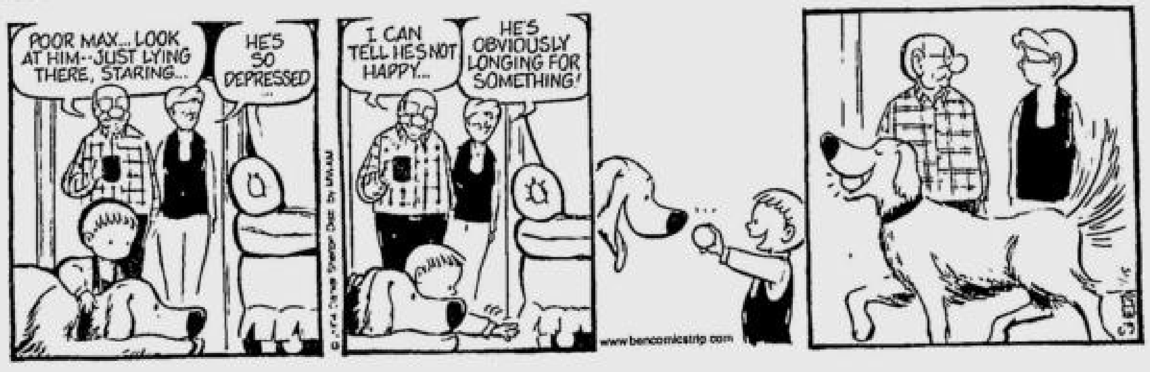
**MIKROKOSMOS**

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKUU... ILANG LINGGO NA'KONG NAGDA-DIET, WALA PA RING PAGBABAGO!
WOW, INAY! ANG PAYAT NYO NA, A!
TALAGA?
OPO, PERO..
..KONTING KONTI LANG, HINDI NGA HALATA E!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

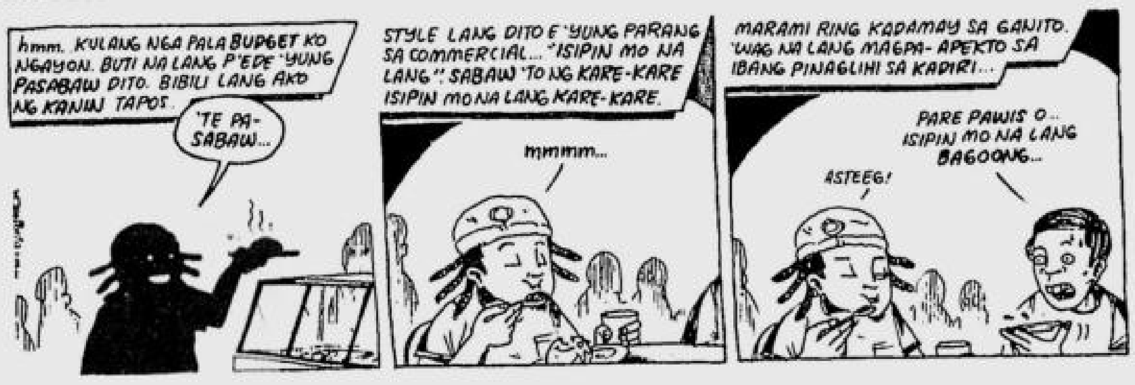
**BEN**

BY DANIEL SHELTON


POOR MAX... LOOK AT HIM--JUST LYING THERE, STARING...
HE'S SO DEPRESSED
I CAN TELL HE'S NOT HAPPY...
HE'S OBVIOUSLY LONGING FOR SOMETHING!
www.bencomicstrip.com

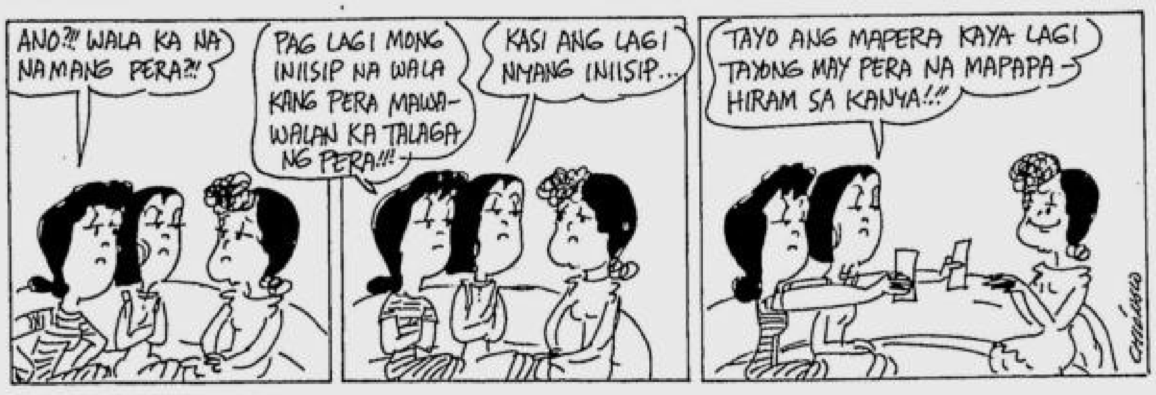
**KIKO MACHINE**

BY MANIX ABRERA


hmm. KULANG NGA PALA BUDGET KO NGAYON. BUTI NA LANG P'EDE 'YUNG PASABAW DITO. BIBILI LANG AKO NG KANIN TAPOS.
'TE PA-SABAW...
STYLE LANG DITO E 'YUNG PARANG SA COMMERCIAL... "ISIPIN MO NA LANG". SABAW 'TO NG KARE-KARE ISIPIN MO NA LANG KARE-KARE.
mmmm...
MARAMI RING KADAMAY SA GANITO. 'WAG NA LANG MAGPA-APEKTO SA IBANG PINAGLIHI SA KADIRI...
PARE PAWIS O... ISIPIN MO NA LANG BAGOONG...
ASTEEG!

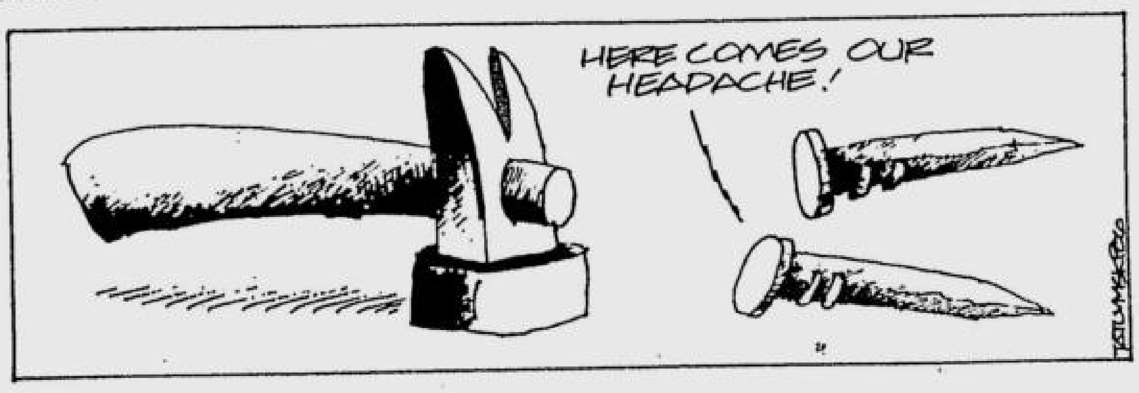
**LOVEKNOTS**

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO?!! WALA KA NA NAMANG PERA?!!
PAG LAGI MONG INIISIP NA WALA KANG PERA MAWAWALAN KA TALAGA NG PERA!!!
KASI ANG LAGI NYANG INIISIP...
TAYO ANG MAPERA KAYA LAGI TAYONG MAY PERA NA MAPAPAHIRAM SA KANYA!!!
CHIONGLO

**TULDOK**

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HERE COMES OUR HEADACHE!
TATUMAKER00

# What do the Mangyans of Mindoro eat?

## COUNTRY COOKING

*Micky Fenix*

A REDDISH DRINK WAS IDENTIFIED AS *gumamela* juice. If that doesn't make you curious, I don't know what will.

Listed as one of the drink selections on the menu of the Mangyan Exhibit luncheon at the M Café of the Ayala Museum, the juice is reportedly produced by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

Students of the College of the Holy Spirit (once Holy Ghost College) were always made aware of the Mangyans of Mindoro. Our nuns, German and Filipino, made sure we supported their missionary work among this indigenous people. We either gave part of our small allowance or sent our old clothes.

So when the invitation was sent to view a Mangyan exhibit (ongoing until Jan. 23) and taste the food at the Ayala Museum, I remembered my alma mater. And now, I was curious because the nuns never really said much about the Mangyans or their culture. My sparse information never got beyond their unique writing system.

The Mangyan script was there, the syllabic writing system etched with a knife on bamboo. And so were the clothes, skirts made of long strips of dark *nito* (black fern) wound around a woman's abdomen up to her thighs, like a series of hoops.

The Mangyan women we met that day, however, wore woven skirts and blouses with cross patterns, the costume of a particular tribe called the Hanuno.

What struck many of us was how similar Mangyan art was to that of other indigenous peoples in the country. The beadwork, for instance, had almost the same patterns. The basket weaves looked almost the same. We learned of another similarity when someone mentioned the Mangyans' liking for canned sardines.

The Aetas and the Bagobos of Davao also love sardines. They will gladly exchange their native chicken for them. Aetas and Mangyans advertise their having had a meal of the coveted sardines by using the remaining oily tomato sauce on their hair. Lowlanders find this difficult to understand and deride the cultural communities for the practice.

The inadequate amount or total absence of fish in their diets may explain this fondness for sardines. Canned fish is also portable, has long shelf life and tastes different from what is on their daily menu. It's a prestigious item because sardines don't come free.

Owning and eating canned sardines show that someone either had money or had something good enough to barter.

### Sardine patties

And so, at the exhibit, it was the first item on our menu—sardine cakes with *kaffir aioli.* I wondered if the Mangyans with us would appreciate this kind of transformation—pressing sardines into patties, frying them and then flavoring with an unfamiliar kind of lime.

For the others attending the lunch, it was explained that it's not Mangyan cooking we were to taste. The menu only featured specific ingredients used by Mangyans.

Lolita Delgado Fansler, Mangyan Heritage Center board of trustees president, also informed us that the ingredients were also not sourced from Mindoro because the Mangyans didn't produce enough and, even if they did, the recent floods in the province would make it impossible to bring those to Manila.

The transformation at the Museum Café was done by Sau del Rosario, veteran chef of many restaurants. The sardine cake was treated like crab cake and served with arugula salad and beetroot vinaigrette.

On one side of the plate was the Mangyan letter for M. It could have stood for Mangyan, museum or, and I would have been really flattered, my first name. Our place mats had the Mangyan syllabic script and instructions on how to write our own names.

### Poetry

In between courses, we had more information regarding the Mangyan culture. Perhaps the most beautiful was a recitation of an *ambahan*, a Mangyan poem with a meter of seven syllable lines, by Antoon Postma, the expert on the community's culture and its indefatigable promoter, researcher and translator.

We had a creamy soup of *kabatse*, their word for *patani* (lima beans). The *kabatse* espresso was served with roasted *kamote.*

The main dish was a mix of so many ingredients—poached chicken, *upo* salad, *ube* ravioli, *kalabasa* fritters, pesto sauce. And then a bread stick, black sesame seeds embedded into it. I suppose the chef had so many ingredients to work with and had to use them all. Finding out that black sesame seeds were part of Mangyan ingredients was a surprise and I thought how those seeds were considered exotic by chefs.

**CANNED** sardine transformed into cakes with arugula, kaffir aioli and beetroot vinaigrette; (below) the Mangyan of Mindoro

For dessert, it was banana and *kasuy* worked into a chocolate mousse in a tart shell and tasting like a banoffi pie.

It might seem odd to many people that we were not served genuine Mangyan cooking. Fansler explained that the Mangyan had basic roasted and boiled food, with salt for flavoring. So she thought that if café diners were made aware of the ingredients that Mangyans used, they might become curious enough to see the exhibit, too. Or the other way around.

Exhibit visitors can round off the experience by dining at the café where even waiters wear the outfit of the Hanuno tribe of the Mangyans.

# Make your own truffle menu

**THE BELLEVUE Hotel's Cake of the Month, Symphony, is a combination of creamy orange marzipan base and rich Williams chocolate cream pudding. Call 7718181.**

## DINING OUT

**THE HYATT Regency Manila** is offering a special truffle lunch and dinner, Jan. 14-28, at the Mediterranean-inspired restaurant, Café Al Fresco. The restaurant's chef has prepared three set truffle menus. Set menu 1 includes Carpaccio of Truffle with Fresh Parmesan Cheese, Sea Scallop and Truffle Salad, and Fresh Procinini Mushroom and Truffle soup. Set menu 2 consists of White Truffle Risotto a la Milanese, Filet Mignon crusted with truffle herbs, and Ravioli Pomodoro topped with freshly-shaved truffles. Guests can make their own menus by choosing from the available appetizers and main courses. The truffle dinner costs P950+ per person.

**THE BELLEVUE Hotel** offers Chinese buffet, Jan. 27-29, especially prepared by guest chef Jin Lai He from Guangzhou, China. Dishes include Roasted Peking Duck, Braised Abalone in Oyster Sauce, Steamed Lapu Lapu in Lotus Leaves and Steamed Crab, among others. Get 2006 forecasts from a guest astrologer or take home a special giveaway. Call 7718181.

**THE SULO Hotel's** Diwata Cocktail Lounge and Lobby Lounge offer "Barchow," a selection of *pica-pica*: Gambas al Ajillo, Calamares, Tenderloin Tips sautéed in mushroom sauce, and Chicken Liver Wrapped in Bacon. Happy hour is 5:30-8 p.m., with free pica-pica buffet, at Diwata. Discounts of 50 percent on standard drinks and 25 percent on premium drinks are offered. Call 9245051 to 71.

**HOLIDAY Inn's Raphael Café presents "French Festival," Jan. 16-March 14. Executive chef Cyrille Soenen presents an exciting mix of French *cuisine du terroir* and *cuisine nouvelle*. Dishes include Moules a la Mariniere (mussels in white wine and garlic), Blanquette de Veau (veal stew) and Pot-au-Feu (boiled beef dinner). The café's French lunch buffet, served 12 noon-2:30 p.m., costs P800+ per person. A post-holiday two-for-the-price-of-one treat is available for a limited period. Call 6337111 loc. 7416.**

# Learn healthy cooking, Jan. 14

THE MAYA KITCHEN WILL teach heart-friendly recipes in its "Low Calorie and High Fiber Menu Sampler" class, 3-6 p.m., Jan. 14.

Low-calorie recipes include Cabbage and Bean soup, Chicken and Basil Lasagna, Roast Beef Oriental Salad, and Banana Pyramid with Vanilla Custard Sauce.

The course will give useful tips on how to make low-calorie cooking more flavorful, how to increase the amount of fiber in the diet, and how to calculate calorie requirements.

Participants can get Maya's latest publication, "Mix & Match 5 cookbook," for free.

Basic cooking standards will be taught in "Basic Culinary," 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Jan. 24-27. The hands-on class will cover proper hygiene, sanitation and safety, nutrition and nutritional cooking, proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs and spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing and de-boning poultry, filleting fish and meat, fabrication with actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry and meats all the way to dessert including garnishing for plate presentation.

Enrollees will get a free "Mix & Match cookbook."

Learn easy-to-follow recipes in "Fundamentals of Bakery Production," 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Jan. 17-20. Also included are standard baking techniques, the use of ready mixes, bread, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes.

Visit Maya Kitchen (Tuesday-Saturday) at the 8/F Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 8921185 or 8925011 loc. 108. Or send e-mail to mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph

# Cashless shop card fails to live up to its promise

## THE CONSUMER

*Marietta Velasco Giron*

DORIS IROG OF TERESA ORCHARD AND Nursery thought it would be more convenient and safer to use a cash card for shopping during the holidays so she would not have to carry so much money. She opened a cashless-shopping account with the Equitable-PCIB Ortigas branch.

However, instead of the convenience she expected, using the card turned out to be a bigger hassle. When she used the card to pay for P3,597 worth of purchases at Kamiseta shop in Robinsons East Mall, the cashier said it was declined by the swiping machine.

So as not to waste more time arguing with the cashier, and to avoid further embarrassment, Irog used her credit card to pay for the purchases.

But that was not the end of her story. When she checked her bank balance after the holidays, she discovered that P3,597 was debited from her cashless-shopping account. The amount, of course, has also been charged to her credit card.

We did our own investigation. We found it impossible to get connected to the bank's customer service department, but we managed to talk to a supervisor of Kamiseta.

According to the supervisor, the bank signified to the store its intention to give Irog her refund within five days. That was last week. As of this writing, Irog has yet to get her refund.

Speaking of bank woes, publicist Pete Dacuycuy shares his frustration with a bank on Aguirre St., BF Homes, Parañaque City.

He said: "I opened an ATM (automated teller machine) account at a neighborhood bank before the holidays. The bank staff informed me that my ATM card would not be available until Jan. 15 because the card validating machine was out-of-commission. I went ahead with the opening of the new account on the understanding that I would be allowed to withdraw over the counter using a withdrawal slip. (After the account was opened) I was able to make two withdrawals.

"Last Monday (Jan. 9), however, the bank did not allow my authorized representative to make a withdrawal on my behalf. In spite of my explanation that I needed the money badly, the bank refused to dispense the cash from my own deposit."

To make the story short, Dacuycuy closed the account.

### Bank heists in 2005

Rep. Joseph A. Santiago is calling on the National Bureau of Investigation to lead the investigation on the alarming incidence of bank robbery. He blamed the rampant bank heist on "lack of law enforcement."

In a press statement, the representative from Catanduanes disclosed that, in the last three years, robbers looted 100 bank branches and their armored vehicles. The thieves stole a total of P221 million in cold cash. Last year alone, there were 22 bank heists representing a loss of P90 million, Santiago said.

For more details on bank heists, write to Rep. Santiago at Rm. 519 South Wing, House of Representatives, Batasang Pambansa Complex, Quezon City or call his spokesperson, lawyer Lyle Surtida, at 931605.

### Feedback

From Cynthia Velasco: "I just read the reactions of M. Galang and J. Maxwell to your shrinking *pan de sal* article (Dec. 29), and remembered what my brother told me about the saying *"pag binato ka ng bato, batuhin mo ng tinapay.' Sa sobrang mahal daw ng pan de sal,* that saying was no longer (practical). Thus, the saying should now be: *"Pag binato ka ng bato, batuhin mo rin ng bato.'"*

# Fine dining without the guilt

From page C1

ral medicine practitioners—is a way to live in peace with our health, and harmony with nature and animals.

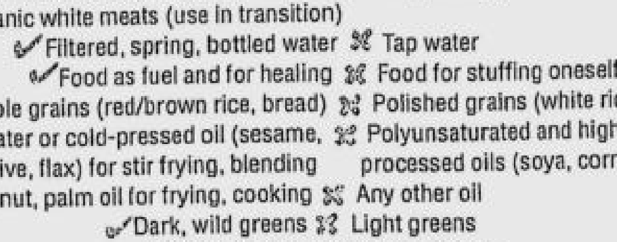
It brings us back in touch with our food instincts and taste sensations, allowing us to select foods our body needs. It is, at best, a holistic mind-body-spirit experience.

Natural nutrition advocate Rempe assures walk-in or checked-in diners of fresh quality, organic, nutritious gourmet surprises for each course meal. After all, chef Felix, a young German of 29, brings with him 10 years of culinary art honed at some of the best European fine-dining restaurants in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and France.

He has come from both sides of the diet fence, making a career and diet transformation for himself in the last three years. He trained how to be a natural, organic, vegetarian chef at organic farms in Spain and alternative retreat centers in the United States in between five-star hotel stints.

But don't just take another person's advice for it—go squeeze the juice out of nutrient-rich suncooked foods as the chef colors your plate with lycopene red tomatoes, sunny beta-carotene soup, chlorophyll greens and dabs of mineral-rich aromatic herbs, to transform a culinary work of art into the pink of health you are becoming.

cut and keep

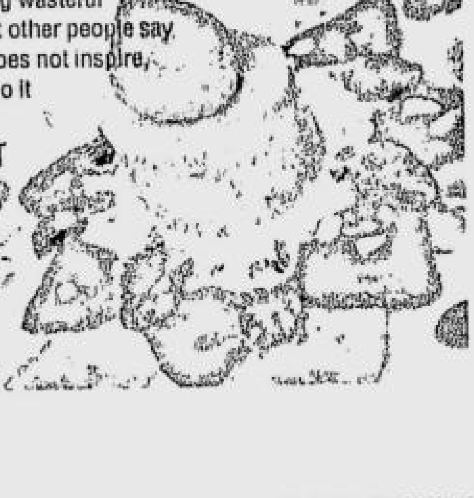


EXECUTIVE CHEF Felix Schoener of VEG.A.N! Gourmet Dining

| CHOOSE: | INSTEAD OF: |
|---|---|
| ✓ Organically grown produce | Commercially grown produce |
| ✓ Vegetarian "mock meats," organic raw dairy (like *gatas kalabaw*), organic white meats (use in transition) | Animal products, especially processed meat |
| ✓ Filtered, spring, bottled water | Tap water |
| ✓ Food as fuel and for healing | Food for stuffing oneself |
| ✓ Whole grains (red/brown rice, bread) | Polished grains (white rice, bread) |
| ✓ Water or cold-pressed oil (sesame, olive, flax) for stir frying, blending | Polyunsaturated and highly processed oils (soya, corn, canola) |
| ✓ Coconut, palm oil for frying, cooking | Any other oil |
| ✓ Dark, wild greens | Light greens |
| ✓ Organic wine | Beer and liquor |
| ✓ Raw nut butter (cashew, pili, almond) | Peanut butter |
| ✓ Dates, raisins or muscovado | Refined sugar |
| ✓ Sun-dried sea salts, sea vegetables | Iodized/processed table salts |
| ✓ Dried fruits | Candy |
| ✓ Seed-bearing fruits | Seedless, hybridized fruits |
| ✓ Fresh fruits and vegetables, juiced with coconut water | Canned, bottled, carbonated beverages |
| ✓ Yams or sweet potatoes | White potatoes |
| ✓ Lemon, oil and herbs to top salads | Cooked, processed dressings |
| ✓ People, environment supportive of healthy lifestyle | Otherwise |
| ✓ Being creative | Sitting in front of the TV |
| ✓ Riding a bike or walking | Riding / driving a car |
| ✓ Recycling | Being wasteful |
| ✓ Trusting your instincts | What other people say |
| ✓ Always having fun | If it does not inspire, why do it |

GUILTLESS DESSERT

Banana-lime flan
with strawberries
and champagne sauce

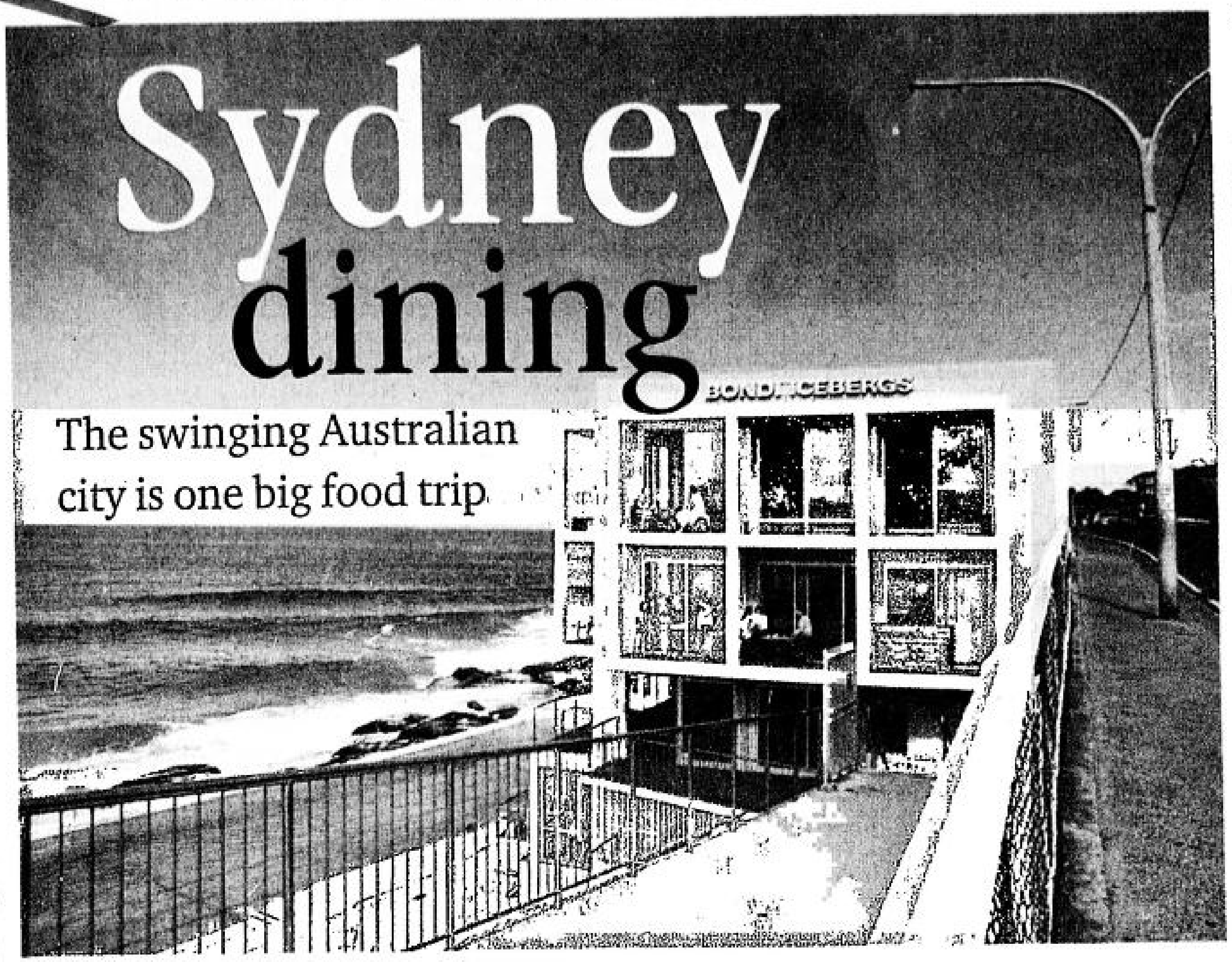


SOURCE: VITAL CREATIONS BY CHAD SARNO

cut and keep

# Sydney dining

## The swinging Australian city is one big food trip



SEASIDE dining at Icebergs on Bondi Beach

TETSUYA'S signature dish: Confit of Ocean Trout

Text and photos by J. Gamboa

SYDNEY IS A GREAT EATING CITY! The city is blessed with immaculate seafood, close proximity to the Hunter Valley that's famous for wines, and residents who seem to be conscious of eating healthy, fresh and, when possible, organic food. And not to mention, the city is as beautiful as a postcard.

The food seems as relaxed and diverse as the people. In every restaurant I dined in, there were raw oysters (though they liked to call them as served "natural"), some sort of raw fish in the form of a tartare or carpaccio, and lots of cheeses and citrus. I guess they try to make the most of Australia's bounty.

You can't go wrong with making a trip to Sydney, especially since it's only eight hours away from Manila. Let me share with you a few places where I dined on a recent trip. G'day mates!

### Tetsuya's

I asked my pal living in Sydney to book me at Tetsuya's for dinner three weeks before my trip. Sadly, she said it was already fully booked for all the days I would be in town. But she did ask them to place me on the waiting list.

At 6 p.m., Tetsuya's called my hotel to inform me that they could accommodate me for a 7 p.m. seating. Though I had reservations at Rockpool (by Neil Perry, Sydney's super celeb chef), I quickly cancelled them for a chance to dine at Tetsuya's. (I recalled a few years back that my good friend, Werner Berger, and I passed up the chance to dine at French Laundry because we were lazy. That decision has haunted me ever since.)

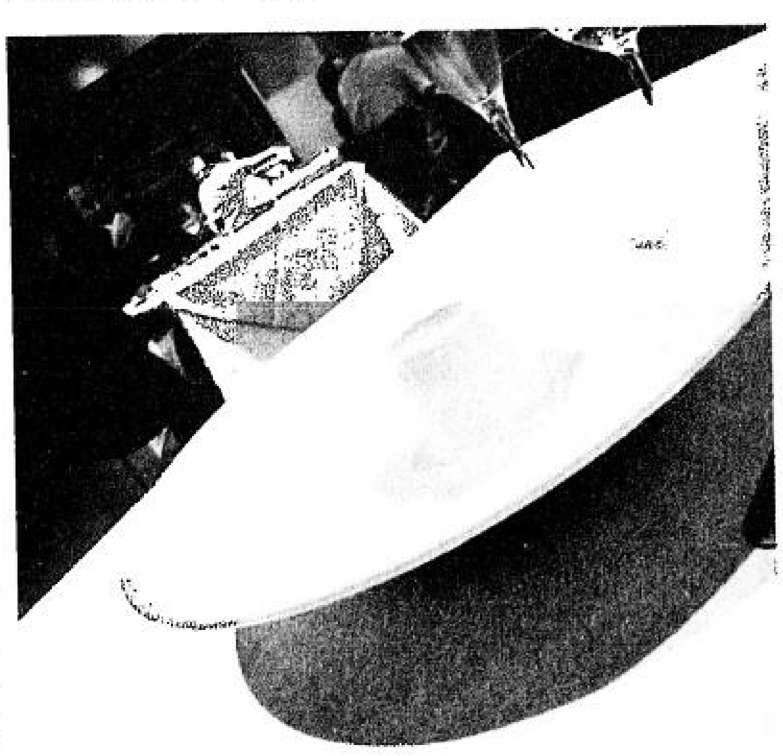
I quickly put on my jacket and hailed a cab in rush hour for a 30-minute ride that usually took 20 minutes to walk, only to arrive at exactly 7 p.m.

Tetsuya's is a bit of an oddity. It is located in a Japanese-style two-story house in the middle of the Sydney Central Business District. The building originally housed a Japanese restaurant and was built by the Suntory Company. It is the only establishment in Sydney I know that has a driveway and basement parking aside from the larger hotels.

Once you arrive you are greeted by Danny, the valet, from Novaliches. Danny is just too happy to see a *kababayan* dine at his place of work. He instantly tells you how many years he has been living in Sydney and his plans to retire in the Philippines once he can collect his retirement benefits.

Tetsuya's suddenly doesn't feel like the formal and stuffy fine dining place you expect it to be. Upon entering, you are welcomed by name, of course, and guided to one of a number of dining rooms that surround a Japanese stone garden.

ESTABLISHMENT Hotel bar



BLAST from the past dessert—Ile Flotant or Floating Island

GRILLED Bread with Dried Olives and Taramasalata at Icebergs

Once seated in the elegant and understated dining room, champagne is offered, and the menu is announced. There are no printed menus at Tetsuya's. The waiter will explain that the evening's menu is made up of 12 courses with an optional oyster course served "natural" as the first course.

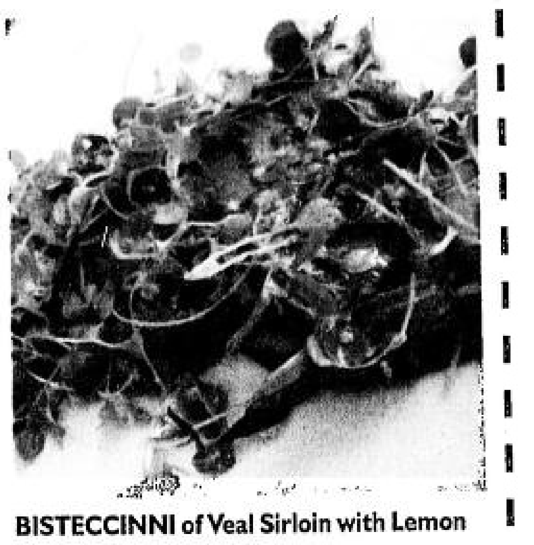
So you don't have to remember all 13 courses, they just tell you all the appetizers first, next the mains and, lastly, the desserts. They are careful to ask if you have any allergies to certain foods. Or if you desire anything special in particular, they will do their utmost to satisfy your request. Now that's service!

And this is all done very nicely and without the slightest hint of stuffiness.

A meal at Tetsuya's will run you up A$175 (US $135), and will take about 2 ½ hours. Quite a bargain if you divide the number of courses by the price, which comes down to A$13.46 per course! That's a steal!

If you should choose to have the wine pairing consisting of three reds and three whites, that is an additional A$75.

In the end, I thought the meal and experience were exceptional. This was one meal in Sydney where the surroundings did not overshadow the food, and the food was at the forefront of the experience. No wonder the Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2006 gives Tetsuya's a score of 19/20 and a 3-toque rating! Don't miss it. Book early for your trip in 2006.



BISTECCINNI of Veal Sirloin with Lemon

### Icebergs Dining Room and Bar

This restaurant is just beautiful, inside and out. Located on Bondi Beach, about 15 minutes by cab from the city center, you will come across a building set on a cliff overlooking the pristine ocean.

The building houses a health club and café on the lower floors and Icebergs on top. The menu is very straightforward, simple and clean Italian, made to match the interiors, and not to take away from the real show: the view.

I went for lunch, but others say the place takes on a different vibe at dinner. I guess, then, this is a place worth experiencing in Sydney anytime of the day.

### est.

This was voted by the Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2006 as Restaurant of the Year. And it has every right to be.

Chef Peter Doyle's style is contemporary, making use of what's good and fresh, concentrating on pure flavors, again very straightforward but with no inclination to a particular cuisine.

The dining room is beautiful and so is the bar on the ground floor, making it very difficult to ascend to the dining room.

For lunch I had a seafood soup with Harissa, a North African spicy condiment. Simple and tasty. For a main, I had the Swordfish with Preserved Lemons, Artichoke Heart, Almonds and Edamame, and finished off with some Beaufort Cheese with Gala Apple, Celery and Pecan salad.

### No tipping

The best part is you don't need to tip in Australia! They do not expect the usual 15-20-percent tip like in America! I've heard that since the minimum wage in Australia is about $25/hour, tipping is unnecessary, but do tip if you think the service deserves it. It will always be most appreciated.

### Delicious details:

Tetsuya's
529 Kent Street, Sydney
P: 612 9267 2900
Website: www.tetsuyas.com

Icebergs Dining Room and Bar,
One Knotts Ave., Bondi Beach
P: 612 9365 9000
Website: www.idrb.com

est.
At the Establishment Hotel
252 George St., Sydney
P: 612 9240 3010
Website: www.merivale.com/establishment/est

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# Post-holiday discoveries

KITCHEN RESCUE

*Reggie Aspiras*

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON brings new discoveries, especially when you don't recycle. Ha ha ha! Three must-try...

1. Kwong Bee special pork Macau-style sausage from Cebu. Fry crisp for breakfast or use for your Chinese recipes. Yum! (Cebu Legazpi Marketing in Binondo, tel. 2414608)

2. Dolly Galang's Danish rolls. Excellent with coffee, or even without. Soft bread oozing with sweet butter. This stays on the hips but, just the same, it's great to eat. (Tel. 6712498 or 0918-9422268)

3. Gold Coin flavored fortune cookies in time for the Chinese New Year. Available in vanilla and strawberry, 100-percent food grade ink is used in the fortune strips. (Tel. 6565801)

### Request

Waiter *po ako* in Greenbelt. Ask *ko lang kung pwede nyo akong tulungan. Ano po ba ang iba-ibang klaseng* service and *pati na po* other service tips? *Ano po ba ang ibig sabihin ng mga* cooking terms—braised, poached? In simple terms *lang po sana, kasi po pag nag di-de*scribe *po ako ng pagkain nahirapan ako i-*explain *sa* guest. *Sana po matulungan niyo ako para po sa trabaho ko.* Thank you.

ARMANDO

It's great to see people go out of their way to learn more about what they do! Armando, here are the answers to your questions.

### Food preparation terms:

**Baked**—Cooked by dry, continuous heat in an oven

**Boiled**—Cooked in liquid at boiling temperature

**Braised**—Browned in small amount of fat, then cooked slowly in liquid in a covered pan

**Broiled**—Cooked by direct heat, either under the source of heat, as in a broiler, or over the source of heat, as on a grill

**Fried**—Cooked in hot fat; pan-fried and sautéed mean cooked in a small amount of fat. Deep-fried means cooked while immersed in a large amount of fat

**Grilled**—Cooked over direct heat, usually hot coal or a griller

**Pan-broiled**—Cooked in a heavy frying pan over direct heat, using little or no fat

**Poached**—Simmered in enough liquid to cover the food

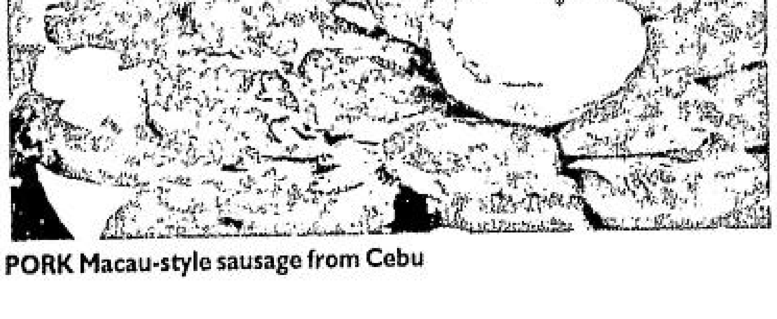
**Roasted**—Cooked uncovered, without water added, usually in the oven

**Sautéed**—Browned or cooked in a small amount of hot fat

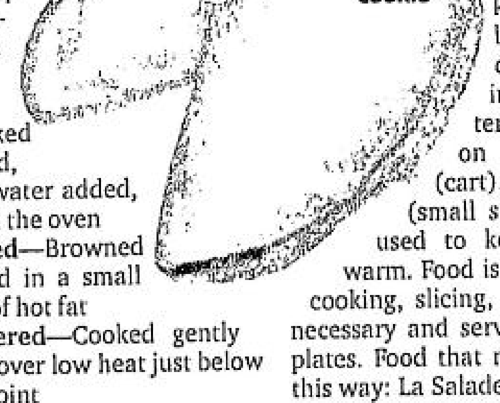
**Simmered**—Cooked gently in liquid over low heat just below boiling point

**Steamed**—Cooked in steam with or without pressure

**Stewed**—Simmered slowly in enough liquid to cover the food



PORK Macau-style sausage from Cebu



FLAVORED fortune cookie

### Types of service

**French**—For this type of service, food is cooked or completed in a small table in front of the guests. Food from the kitchen is brought to the dining room in silver platters and placed on a *guéridon* (cart). A *réchaud* (small spirit stove) is used to keep the food warm. Food is completed by cooking, slicing, garnishing as necessary and served on heated plates. Food that may be served this way: La Salade César, Crépes Suzettes. Originated in Europe for nobility

**Russian**—Food is fully prepared and attractively arranged on silver platters in the kitchen. To serve, the server lays a heated plate before each guest from the right side, going around the table clockwise. The food is brought in and presented to the guests at the table. The server then stands to the left of each guest, holding the platter with the left hand, shows each guest the food and then using a large spoon and fork, dishes up the desired portion on the guest's plate. He continues clockwise. Unserved food is returned to the kitchen.

**English**—Food arranged on platters and placed before the host at the head of the table. Host, or one of the servers, carves the meat, if necessary, and dishes up the entrée on individual plates. The plates are handed to the server standing to the left who then serves the guest of honor and then the other guests. This type of service is used typically for a meal served by household staff in a private home. Sauces and side dishes are passed around by guests.

**American**—Food is dished up on plates in the kitchen. Except for the salad, bread and butter, most of the food is placed on the entrée plate.

**Banquet**—Serving a meal to a group of people celebrating a special occasion or honoring special guests. The menu, number of guests, time of service is decided in advance. Tables are set according to the menu. We often see this type of service at hotel functions.

**Family style**—Food is placed on bowls and platters in the kitchen. Waiters place the food at the center of the table. Food is passed around the table by guests who help themselves to their desired portions.

SWEET and soft Danish rolls

**Buffet**—Guests select their food from an attractive arrangement of food on long serving tables. They help themselves or are served by chefs standing behind the buffet table.

(Source: "Waiter and Waitress Training Manual," Dahmer & Kahl)

### Class for cooks

The Gourmet Cucinera 2 series, cooking classes for household cooks and helpers, begins Jan. 24. My assistants will be conducting the classes under my supervision and will be teaching my recipes (from everyday dishes to party food), made simple and economical, in Filipino. Call Cynthia at 9289296 or 9273008.

*For comments or suggestions e-mail raspiras@inquirer.com.ph*

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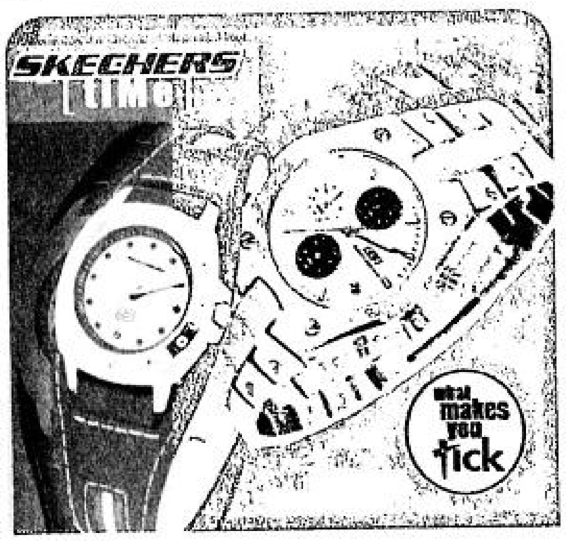
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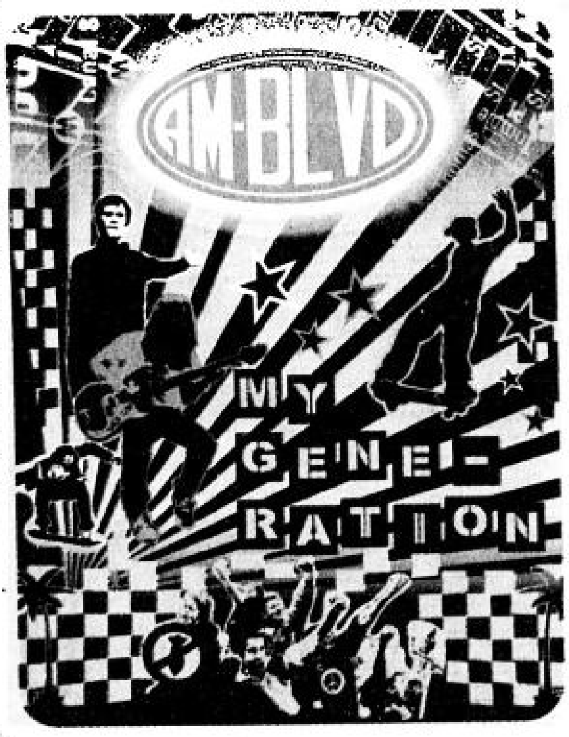
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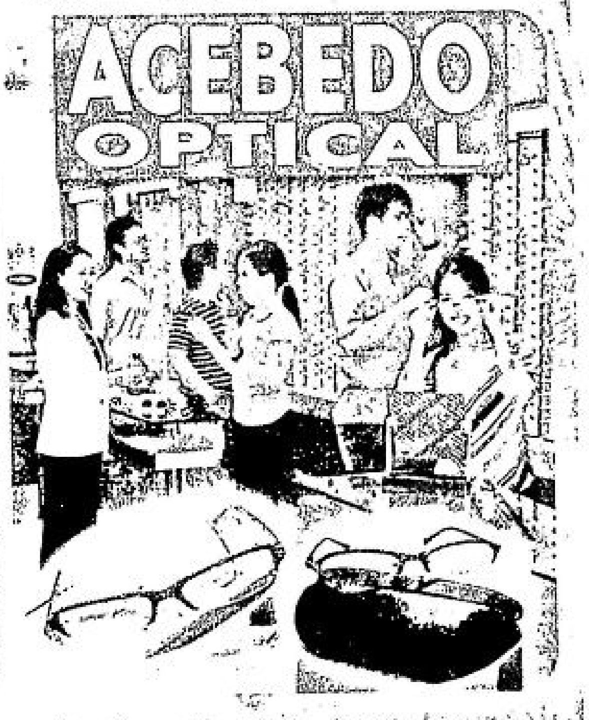
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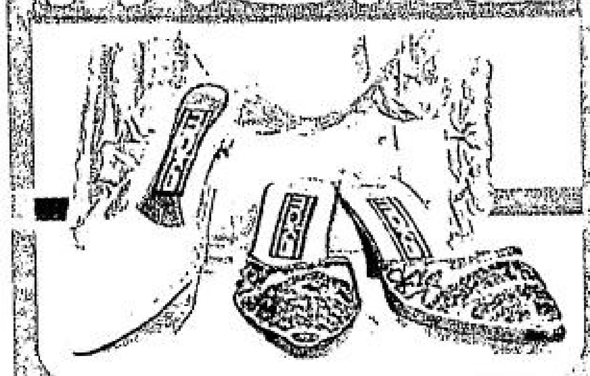

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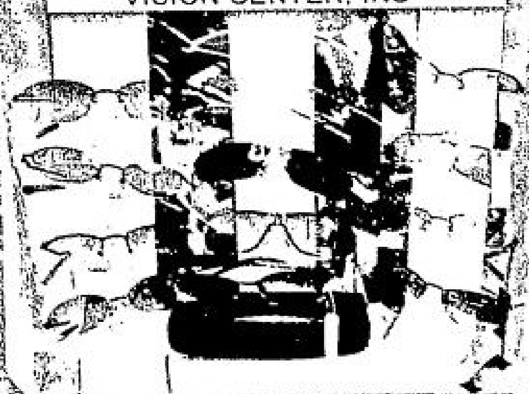

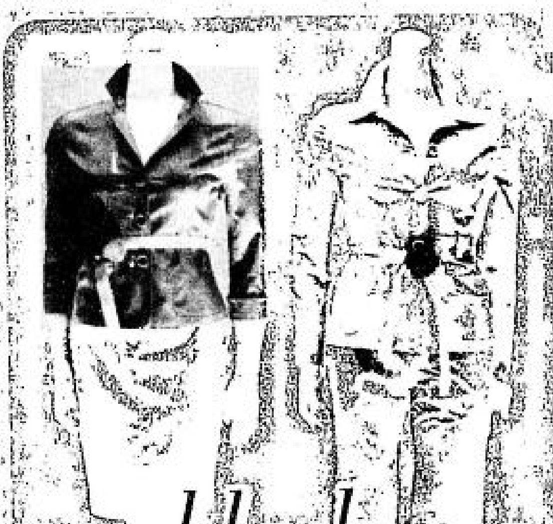

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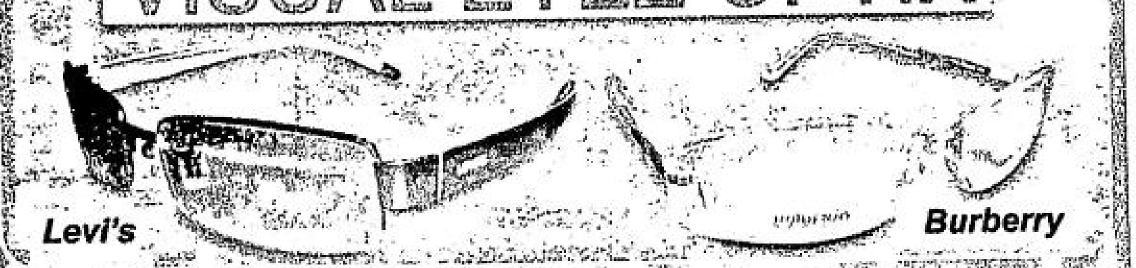
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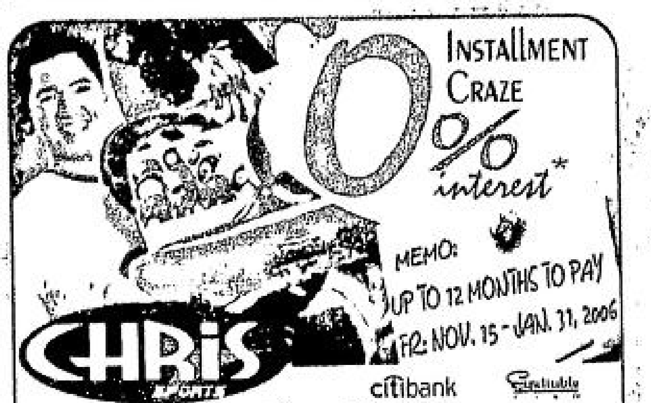
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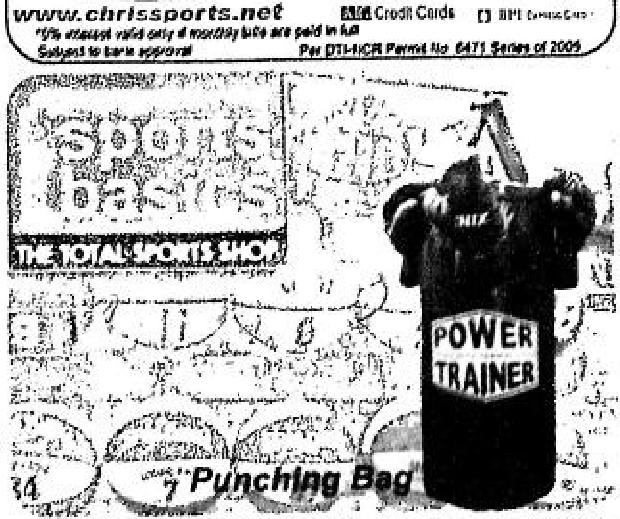
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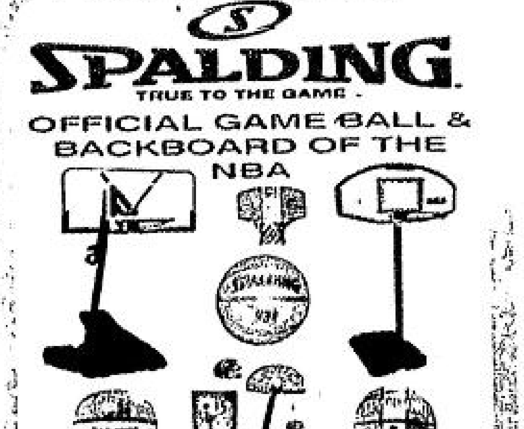

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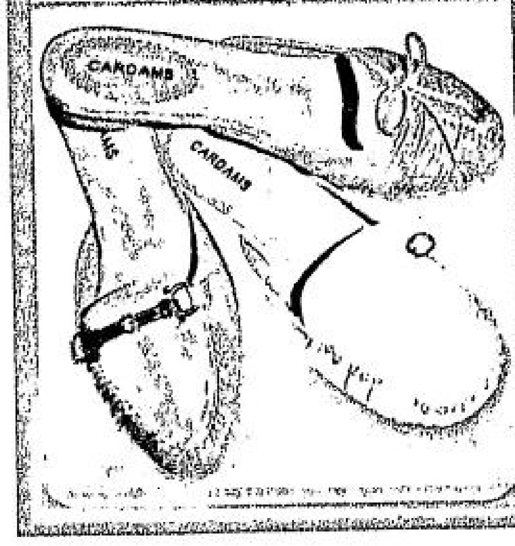

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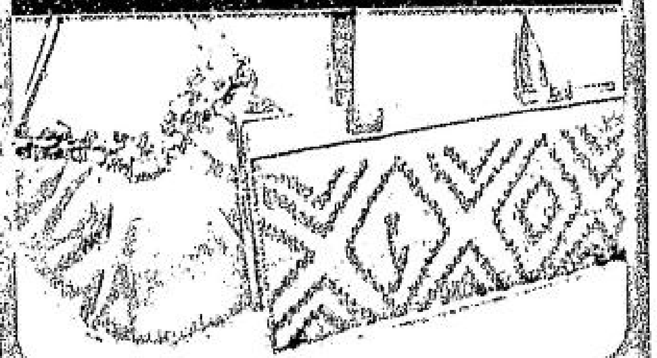

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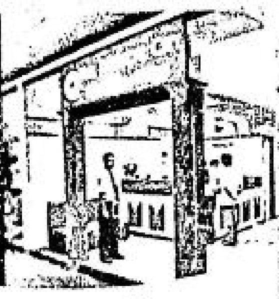

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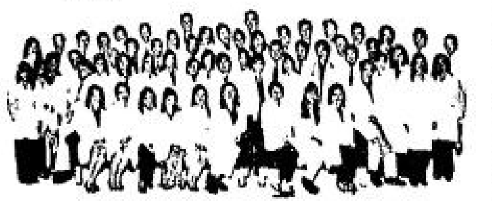

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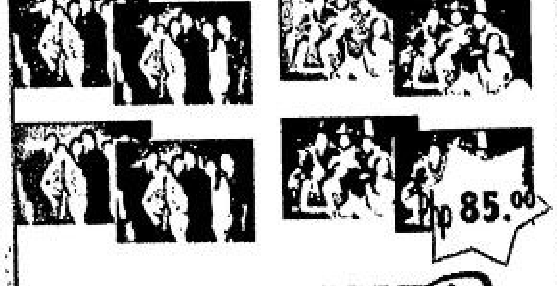

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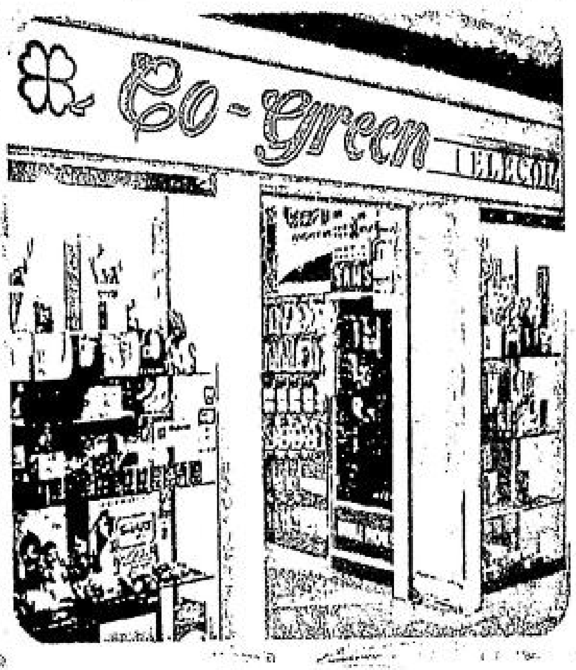
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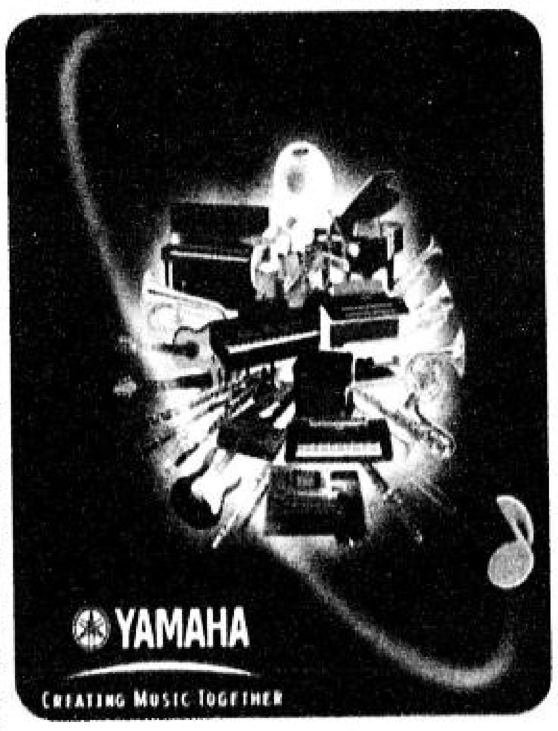
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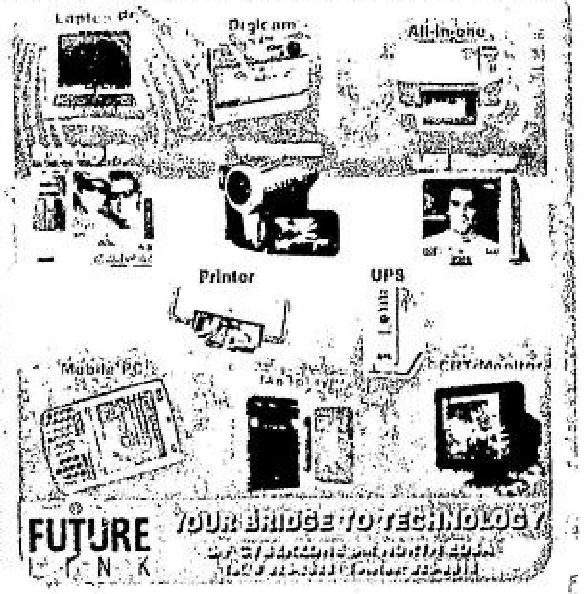
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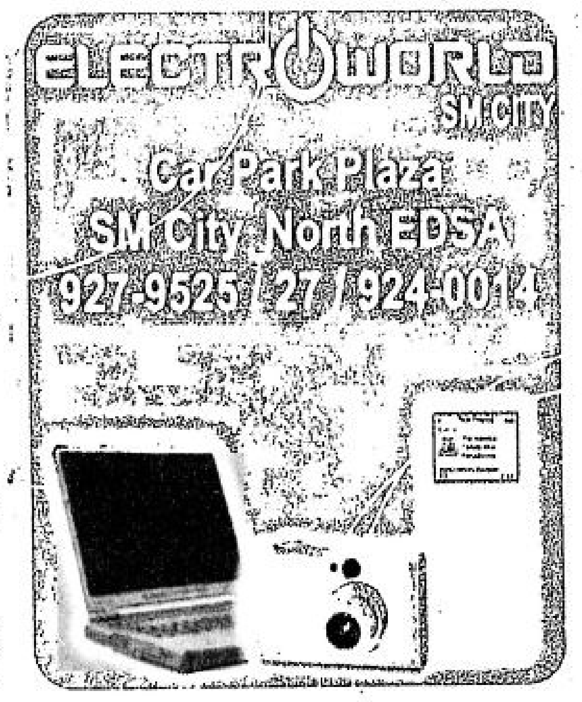

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STAR APPLE

SM SUPERMALLS

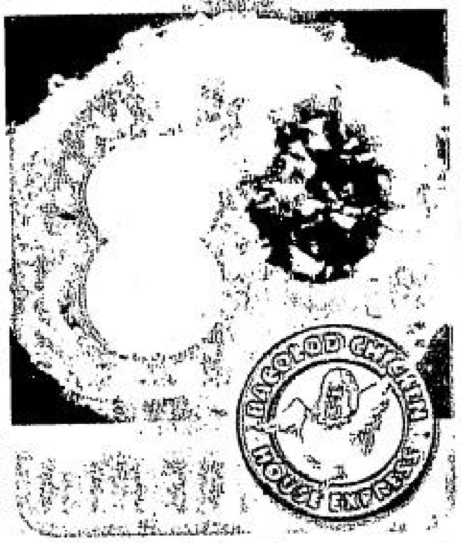
# Taste & Feel the New Year!

## casual dining

Bakahan at Manukan

Bulalo Steak

PALABOK


BACOLOD CHICKEN HOUSE EXPRESS

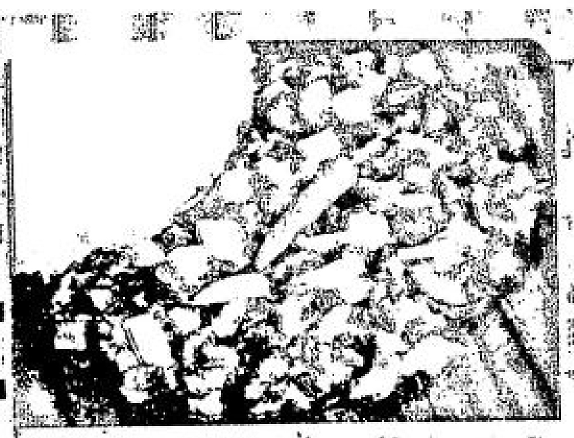
Barrio FIESTA

Sinalab

Cabalen

EAT ALL YOU CAN

with 50 more dishes to enjoy!


Pork Sisig

BALOT BALOT

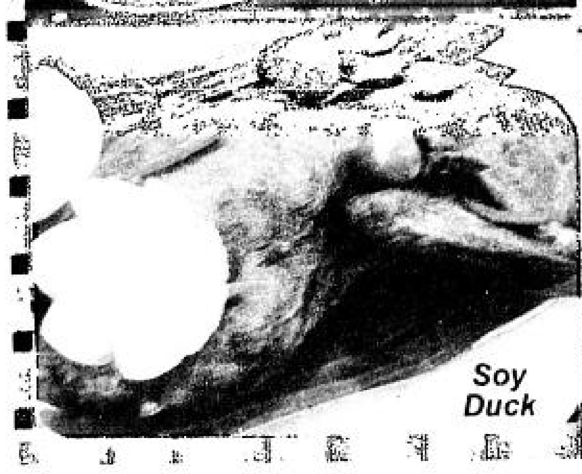
Wei-Chuan

Seafood (haysim)

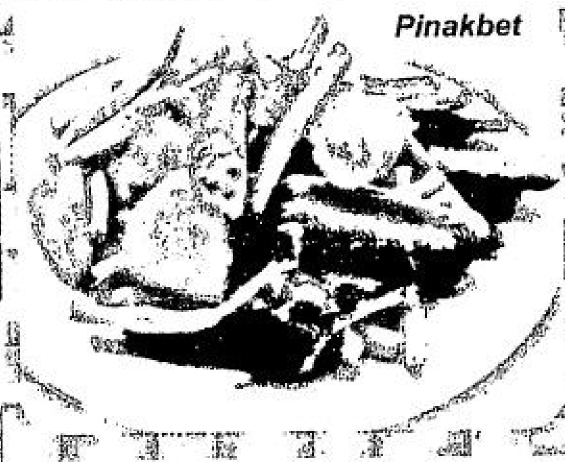
SM FOODCOURT

## good food fast!

Chin's EXPRESS


Soy Duck

Inihaw


Pinakbet

## homeward bound

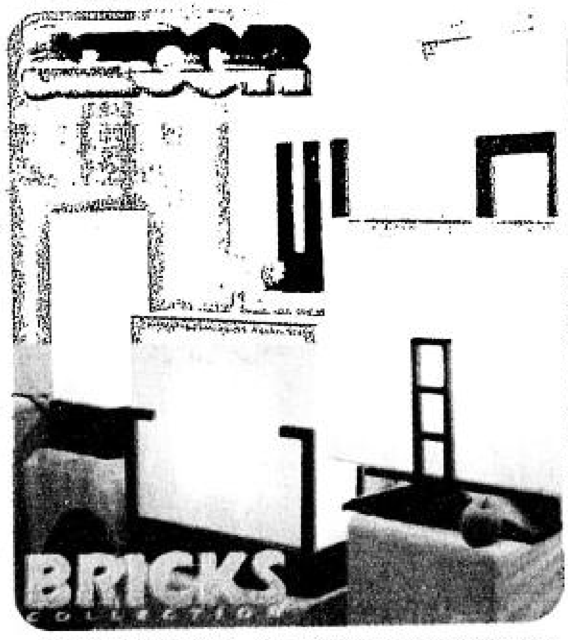
Bed 2 Bath

PERGO

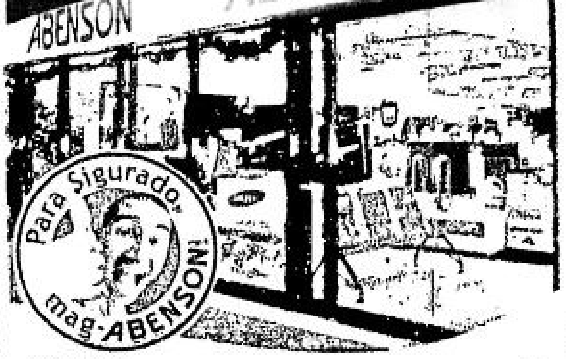
Aquadis

SIFRA

Japanese Doll

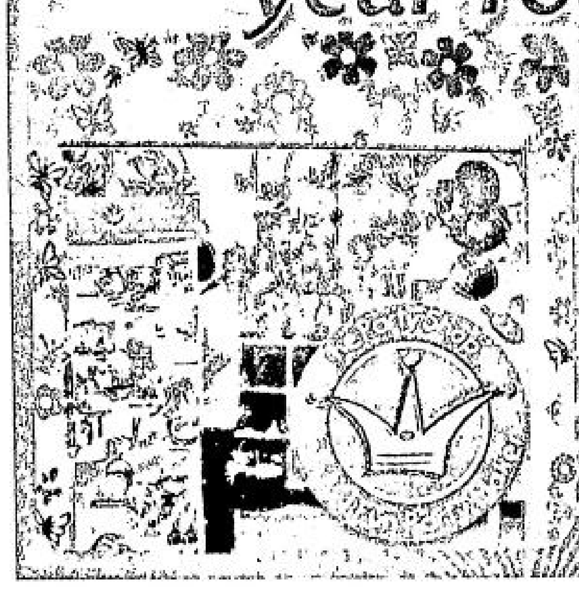

BRICKS
COLLECTION

ABENSON


ABENSON
ABENSON
Para Sigurado, mag-ABENSON!

*Visit us at:*
SM City North Edsa 920-9151 to 53

## year-round fun



Bingo City
1st Level,
SM FAIRVIEW

Bingo Station
3rd Level,
SM BACOOR

4th Level,
SM MANILA

Bingo Plaza
1st Level,
SM CENTERPOINT

Bingo Extravaganza
3rd Level,
SM SUCAT

Pampanga Bingo
3rd Level,
SM PAMPANGA

Bingo Bonanza
3rd Level,
SM MEGAMALL
2nd Level,
SM CITY NORTH
3rd Level,
SM SOUTHMALL

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MILYUN
MILYONG
PA-PREMYO
ARAW-ARAW!

Acrylic Swan round dining table w/ 6 chairs

La Casa Rica

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5th F, Bldg. A SM Megamall,
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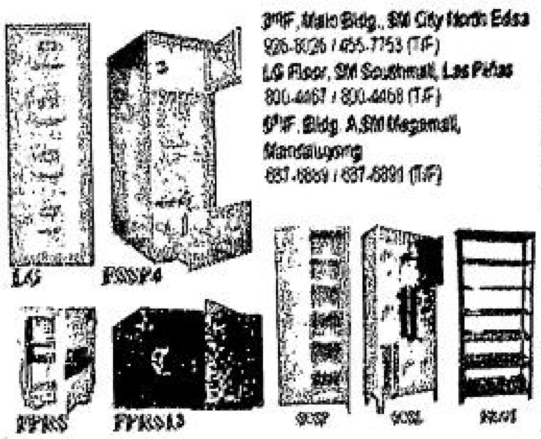
LG
FSSP4
FPRS
FPRS13

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rachelle ann go

Album Tour

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SM NORTH EDSA

LIVE

bea alonzo

January 22
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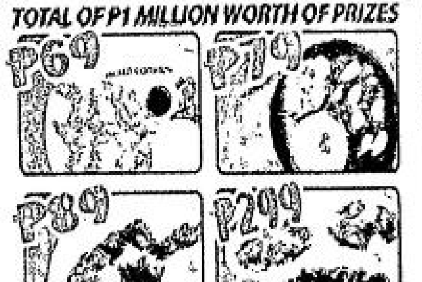
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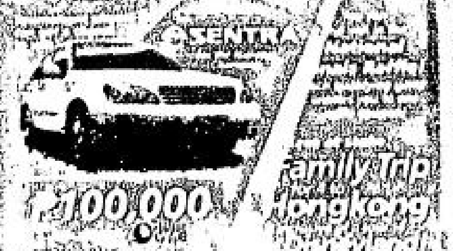
P79
P89
P299

SM FOODCOURT

It's open to everyone!

The 5th SM Bowling Cup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